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ISSUE 52 ■ JANUARY 1991 ■ £1.95

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OPENING MENU



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PRINTED AND BOUND BY CHASE WEB,
St Ives Company, St Austell, Cornwall

DISTRIBUTION (UK and EIRE) MMC Ltd
TEL • 0483 211222

(OVERSEAS) COMAG Ltd TEL • 0895 444055

**FUTURE PUBLISHING,
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SOMERSETTA11 7PY.
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8000 Plus is an independent publication. Future Publishing Ltd have no link with Amstrad plc. We welcome contributions from readers – please enclose a SAE with submissions if return of the material is required. Payment for accepted articles is made 4 weeks after publication date. We take great care to ensure that what we print is accurate, but we cannot accept liability for any mistakes or misprints. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without our permission.
ABC - Jan - June 90 - 27,021

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Well, the New Year has arrived, and will doubtless be a time of change - for the PCW just as much as anything else. It has to be said, however, that 1991 will have its work cut out matching the prodigious output of the last twelve months. A host of top quality new releases for the machine has left the industry in no doubt as to the continuing strength and vitality of the PCW market.

Changes such as these are healthy; but, with anything new, when the dust settles, it is the steadfast, the trustworthy, which

emerge as triumphant. In the world of the PCW, that means LocoScript - the foundation of the machine, and the sturdy platform from which innovation has sprung.

That's why, this month, we've devoted time and space to the program. As well as giving you a free booklet crammed with tips and advice on LocoScript 1 and 2, we've got a special feature on the PCW's native word processor on page 10. We are taking a look beneath the surface of the program, delving into those regions which the manuals don't cover -

from two-column printing to short-cuts in mass file-handling.

And, if the New Year has prompted a money-earning resolution in you, turn to our special feature on page 46, a guided tour of the essential raw materials - in the form of PCW-specific business software with which to equip your favourite desktop companion; working together, they're guaranteed to transform your small business into an efficient, smooth-running organisation, thereby saving both your time and money. A very happy and productive New Year to all of you!

FALLING STAR

Star Micronics make quality dot matrix printing an affordable option

Star Micronics UK have slashed the price of their popular LC24-10 dot matrix printer from over £300 to £259. Star hope that the price change, effectively immediately, will mean that a wider audience of users will be able to have access to high quality dot matrix output.

8000 Plus reviewed the LC24-10 in May of this year, where it chalked up a very impressive 18/20 for its first rate performance. It is fully compatible with the PCW, and will download any characters produced by your machine. It produces high quality text and graphic output from MicroDesign, and will even accommodate additional cards of fonts or RAM, thanks to a small port below the control panel.

The Star LC24-10 is available from most major high street dealers. If you would like further information, or are experiencing difficulty in getting hold of the printer, telephone Star UK on (0494) 471111.

Meanwhile, Aladdink have announced the very timely release of the nostalgically

Just as Star Micronics bring down the price of their popular LC24-10 dot matrix printer, ribbon re-vampers Aladdink bring out an 'everlasting' cassette especially for it. And Christmas has just passed us by!



known 'Everlasting Elsie'. Elsie is a 'miracle' cassette specifically designed for the Star LC (Elsie...get it?) 24-10 printer, and its makers claim that it will last a lifetime, and significantly reduce wear and tear on the print head itself.

Aladdink claim to have landed an

exclusive in the new product, and at £39.95, it is a small price to pay for a product which will last for the length of the PCW's lifetime.

For more details, contact Aladdink on (08907) 50965, or write to the company at Eyemouth, Berwickshire, TD14 5AP.

TWIN PEAKS

In November's News Plus, we told you about a special twin column printing program devised by Gerald Lewis of Cornwall, available free to registered charities throughout the country.

We are happy to report that Mr Lewis describes the response to his offer as being a 'deluge', and he's been hard at work copying the program on to the blank formatted discs which you've been sending him (together with that all important stamped, addressed envelope...).

The response has encouraged Mr Lewis to develop and market the program to everyone - regardless of whether or not you are involved with a charity - but again, not on a commercial basis.

If you would like a copy, and are using LocoScript 2.28 or 2.29 on a PCW8512 or 9512 (sorry, no LocoScript 1 versions available), send a disc, together with the return postage, and a discretionary donation to the British Red Cross Society to Gerald Lewis, 3, Poltair Drive, Penryn, TR10 8NY.

BUDGET HARD DISC

8000 Plus can exclusively reveal that SCA Systems, producers of the excellent PCW Rampac, are nearing completion of a major new product for the PCW.

Details are currently rather sparse, but SCA director Peter Mydlarz has told us that the product is a "budget hard disc", which will have many of the features of the well-known Cirtech Diamond Drive, but will be significantly cheaper.

The release of the new product comes at a very busy time for the company. SCA are involved with the production and supply of Creative Technology's ProScan PCW handscanner. Such has been the demand for the product, that its creators have requested SCA to multiply production levels by eight times the current level.

8000 Plus will be bringing you more details on the new release as soon as they are available, and, naturally, will be seizing a review model in the near future.

SPANISH TIES

If your knowledge of the Spanish language extends beyond ordering 'uno pinto de Waddington's' at the beach bar in Torremolinos, and you also have PCW knowledge which you'd like to swap and share with a Spanish contact, read on.

Javier Santos Clemente (gender unknown, we're afraid) has got in touch with us to see if any readers would be interested in sending tips, listings and general PCW information over to the sunny mediterranean. It seems that there is a dearth of PCW learning available in Spain, so all contributions will be gratefully received.

Javier does read 8000 Plus, but as a beginner in the English language, experiences some difficulty in understanding some of the technical content.

So, don't delay, start checking the Spanish for 'out of data space', 'missing address mark' and so on, and send your correspondence to Javier at Mendi-alde, 10, 1 C.D, 48530 Ortuella-Vizcaya, Spain. Hasta manyana!

NEWS

by Sophie
Lankenau

Cavalier move

Cavalier Software, producers of some of the finest 'vertical' (or specialist) software around, have moved. Contact them now at 3, Bryn Tirion, Nebo Road, Llanrwst, Gwynedd, LL26 OHL. Turn to page 42 of this month's issue for a review of their latest release, Taxi Cab.

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LOCO PRINTER SUPPORT PACK

Locomotive Software have brought out a complete printer driver pack for the PCW range of computers. The reason for the release is that the printer support provided by the versions of LocoScript is to be changed, and separate discs, such as the 9512 Printwheels, and 24-Pin Printer Drivers will no longer be available.

The amalgamated collection has all the files which were previously available on the Printers Drivers disc. This will ensure that there is a driver for the printer which your PCW uses, together with support for additional fonts, and extra drivers for other PCW compatible printers. This range covers over one hundred different drivers, to cover anything from 'simple typewriters' to 'sophisticated laser printers'. This variety means that given the right printer, all of LocoScript's 'special'

characters, such as foreign language and mathematical/scientific characters, can be printed out.

9512 owners will not be left out in the cold either – the new pack contains all the files needed to support all the different language wheels for the native 9512 printer. The addition of a special file to support the Cyrillic wheel means that printing of Greek and Russian characters is also possible.

The Printer Support pack costs £29.95 and is available now from Locomotive Software on (0306) 740606. The previous products, available on separate discs, have been discontinued.

The complete printer support pack from Locomotive replaces the separate discs available to date



NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

If you're fed up of struggling through the manuals, and you could do with a bit of constructive sobriety following the Christmas festivities, you might like to invest in a bit of PCW training to help you on your way.

Our Club and Training Guide, on page 51 of this month's issue, gives details of various training organisations throughout the UK. However, we've just received details of 1991 courses available from Applied Business Technology, who offer approximately 3000 training courses.

The subjects are not, unsurprisingly, all PCW related, but there is a healthy selection on offer for owners of that series of computers.

This includes help on LocoScript, Sage Accounts and dBase. Each course comes with an 'absolute satisfaction guarantee', and is available on site if you cannot attend ABT's headquarters in Essex.

For details of courses, fees and dates, send an SAE to Andrew Tollet, Applied Business Technology Ltd, 306 St Mary's Lane, Upminster, Essex RM14 3HL.

RHYME TIME

Three Inch Software have just released a new Rhyming Dictionary, for use within LocoScript 2. The program is similar to Three Inch's Thesaurus, in that it takes the form of a large LocoFile datafile, accessible from LocoScript with the minimum of fuss.

The Rhyming Dictionary comes on a 720k disc for the B drive of the 8512, or the 9512 A drive. You must have either LocoFile or LocoMail installed on your LocoScript start of day disc for the program to work.

To find a rhyme, all you have to do is to type in the source word in its phonetic form, and the program will then deliver a list of possible rhymes from which you make your selection. The program seems simple to operate, and could be very useful for writers everywhere.

The Rhyming Dictionary costs £19.95, and is available from Three Inch Software, 194, Amyand Park Road, Twickenham, Middlesex TW1 3HY, telephone (081) 892 9219. 8000 Plus will be reviewing the product in the near future.

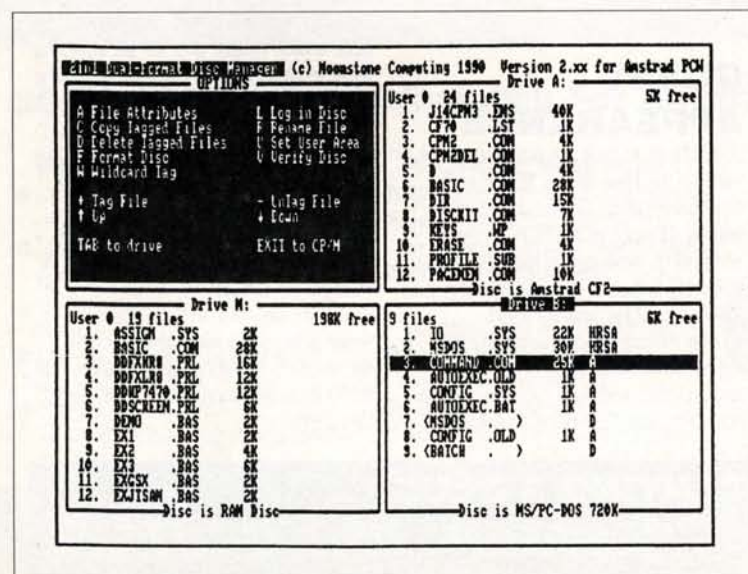
MAN IN THE MOON

Moonstone Computing, producers of the data recovery package PCW Toolkit, have released a new version of their PCW-PC file transfer program, '2-in-1'.

The package is, claim the manufacturers, 'a friendly, fast and easy to use' disc and file manager, which will allow you to navigate groups and discs, copying, deleting and tagging files as you go. 2 in 1 is Flipper and RAM pack compatible,

although Moonstone tell us that it will not work with any hard discs.

The program is available for all PCWs and costs £29.95. Further details can be obtained by contacting Moonstone Computing at Strathclyde Business Centre, 31 Clyde Street, Clydebank, G81 1PF, telephone (041) 941 3120. We will be taking a look at 2-in-1 in the February issue of 8000 Plus.



Moonstone Computing's new program, 2-in-1 promises to make file handling less of a headache. 2-in-1 is Flipper and Rampack compatible.

MAKE A DATE!

A4 Ideas, producers of the diary-on-a-disc utility Datadiary, have released a new, improved version of the program for the coming year.

The utility runs from LocoScript 2, and has been reconfigured to contain up to 192k of data on each side of the disc. This has allowed for extra features not present in the original version.

The program allows you to keep yearly and monthly diaries on disc or printed out as A4 or personal organiser sized pages. There is also a 'page a day' option, or a 'month at a glance' planner for those of you who need to take a quick look at advance commitments. There is even room on the newly configured version for information such as sunrise and sunset times, dates of religious festivals and public holidays – the list is endless!

Datadiary costs £19.95, and is available from A4 Ideas on (0249) 815082.

NEWS

by Sophie
Lankenau

To Crown it all

Lancashire based Crown Computer Products are currently offering the Hewlett Packard DeskJet 500 at a discounted price. The DeskJet 500's big brother, the HP DeskJet Plus, was reviewed in our October issue.

The DeskJet 500 is available from Crown at £399 – that's a staggering £200 cheaper than its usual retail price. Phone Crown Computer Products on (0704) 895854 for further details.

All systems go

We brought you news last month of the release of SP Software's 'Systems Personaliser' program, a very neat utility which allows you to simplify basic CP/M commands such as 'dir', 'save' and so on, to one keypress operations.

The program has aroused a good deal of interest among our readers, but we have been asked by the manufacturers to clarify one point of detail regarding compatibility. The Systems Personaliser is available for expanded 8256s and 8512s only. To order your copy, write to SP Software, 29, Beresford Drive, Boldmere, Sutton Coldfield, B73 5QZ, enclosing cheque or postal order for £15.00 tear on the print head itself.

Bird watching

Those of you who have spent the last month or so singing 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' to yourselves in order to find the answer to one of our Christmas competition questions, take heart. No, the 'two turtle doves' have not migrated out of the song for 1990, it's just that our calculator slipped up.

If you answered question four with either 21 or 23, your entry will be valid. Winners to be announced next month.

ALL CHANGE!

Sadly, this is the last issue of 8000 Plus under the reign of our revered editrice Sharon Bradley. Sharon has decided to give up the high life here in Bath, and, after getting married in December, will be moving to a luxury residence in Hong Kong to continue her journalistic career. Envious? (grr,grr) Not us...

We're sure that you will join us in wishing Sharon every success for the future, and may even be receiving a regular 'Letter from Hong Kong' from our new correspondent!

Meanwhile, we're delighted to welcome Martin Le Poidevin to the ranks of the magazine as Staff Writer. He replaces Sophie Lankenau, who will be taking over as Editor. Martin lists his ambitions as "becoming the quarter back for the New York Giants, owning a Gold Cup winner, and banning all other cars on the road from Bristol to Bath in the mornings." Good luck with that one, Martin!

New Staff Writer Martin Le Poidevin brings American football and horse racing to 8000 Plus!



HIGHLAND FLING

In the September issue of 8000 Plus, we reported that Iain Lang from Bishopton in Scotland was on the look out for fellow PCW-sters to help him form a club.

Well, his wish has been granted, and he has written to tell us about the newly formed SCOTWEST.PCW. Not two months have elapsed, and the club has already held two meetings in Bishopton. Such has been the response, from PCW users with wide and diverse experience, that the meetings are now divided into two tutorial sessions, and rounded off by what Mr Lang describes as a 'seeking-and-giving-help' open forum.

Word about SCOTWEST.PCW has clearly spread fast, and many people who would like to attend the meetings have been unable to do so either because of distance or meeting dates. However, to ensure that no PCW owner is deprived of the benefit of the SCOTWEST wisdom, the club now have plans to distribute a newsletter.

As well as tips, advice and general pearls of PCW wisdom, the newsletter will contain 'Wanted' and 'For sale' advertisements. Your contributions are welcomed for both sections, and you should contact PCW guru Iain Lang on (0505) 863916 for more information.

Incidentally, Mr Lang decided to call the newsletter '7999 MINUS', (very clever), but thought better of it, and has re-christened it 'CHRS(7)', which, BASICcally speaking, means the PCW's native 'beep'.

COLLEGE DAYS

Word has reached us of a new club in Lancaster, based at the Victoria College

of Secretarial, Business and Language Training. The college principal, Isobel Greenfield, tells us that the centre is the main training organisation for Amstrad tuition in the region, and that forming a club would give local PCW owners the benefit of experienced teaching in an informal atmosphere.

The club plans to meet once every month at the college, and membership will be on a subscription basis, at the modest fee of £12 per annum. As well as the usual help and advice offered by most clubs in the UK, the Lancaster group will also provide a disc recovery service at a small charge.

Tuition and guidance will be offered for many areas of PCW-ing, including LocoScript 1 and 2, Supercalc, dBase, WordStar, Sage Accounts and Stop Press to name but a few. Postal membership can also be arranged for those who cannot attend meetings.

It sounds like a very promising club – further enquiries should be directed to Isobel Greenfield on (0524) 33996. Club News would like to hear how the Lancaster group is progressing, and, as soon as you have a name for the club, let us know!

GUEST APPEARANCE

The M25 PCW Club are planning to welcome in the New Year in fine style in downtown Ealing. The group, which is entirely devoted to the PCW range of computers, have invited Merrick Allsopp of Cornix Software to speak at their meeting on 21st January 1991.

Mr Allsopp, whose company are renowned for their first class accounts and business software (such as Simple Accounts, Job Estimating and Product

Costing), will be demonstrating the software, and offering help and advice on any problems which club members have experienced with the Cornix range. He will also be happy to discuss programming techniques, such as the ones used in the development of the company's range of products.

And, if Santa neglected to grace your chimney this Christmas, you might still be in luck. There will be 'generous discounts' available on all Cornix software on the evening.

The meeting will be held at 7.30pm, Monday 21st January, in Ealing, West London. Visitors and prospective members are welcome to attend; all they have to do is to contact Tony Brown on (081)841 3666, or Ken Ritchie on (0992) 583744 (evenings only), for details of admission, membership fee and the all important venue!

FRIENDLY USER?

Enquiries have reached us from two parts of the country concerning the existence of a local PCW club. The first is from Stroud, Gloucester, where Dave Bales is hoping to find some fellow PCW users. Dave can be contacted by writing to 2a Selsley Villas, Selsley West, Stroud, GL5 5LQ.

Meanwhile, in Stafford, Mike Potter is hoping to start a club for anyone in, as he writes, 'the Birmingham/Black Country/Potteries area'. This covers quite a wide radius, and we are sure that there must be other PCW owners lurking out there somewhere. If you're already involved with a club up there in the Midlands, why not get in touch with Mike on (0785) 822861 (evenings, please).

Every month we try to put PCW users in touch with one another nationwide. If you do make contact with fellow PCW-ers as a result, or set up a club of your own, we'd like to hear about it in order to keep our records up to date. So, success stories please, to Club Feat, 8000 Plus, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

STARTING A CLUB?

Well, you've come to the right place. Club News is here to give you that extra helping hand you need when you are trying to get a new PCW user group off the ground. If you write to us with all the details of your planned venture, and leave the rest to us! Letters, please, to Club News, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon BA1 2BW.

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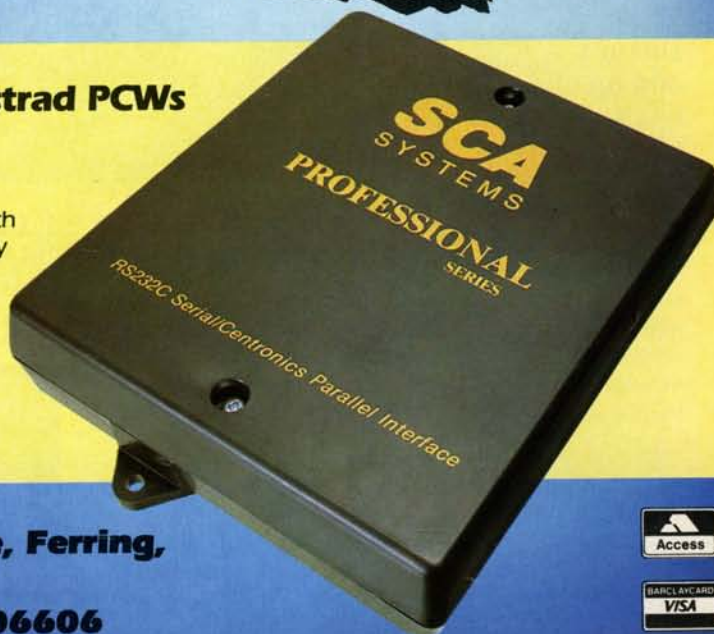
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High Speed Loco

2-column print-outs, printing and editing at the same time, group copying, erasing and moving of files - the list goes on. Rob Ainsley sets to work uncovering 20 vital hints, tricks and tips that the LocoScript manuals don't tell you ...

Sorting it out

LocoScript cannot sort a list into alphabetical order, but there are ways of doing it - see the booklet with this issue of 8000 Plus.

Two's company

If you have a PCW 8256 or 8512 and haven't bought LocoScript 2, what are you waiting for? It's faster than version 1 that you're using, more flexible, and gives you access to all sorts of things like designing your own characters, the LocoFile database, LocoFont's different type styles, Russian, Greek, any accent in any European language... all for £29.95 from 0306 740606.

Doesn't add up

Even though LocoScript is the favourite word processor of thousands of writers and journalists, there's still no easy way to count the words in a document... see the booklet with this issue of 8000 Plus for ways to do it.



Whatever you may think of the LocoScript manuals, you can be sure of one thing: they're far better than most computer instruction books you find these days. But in any manual there are always going to be unanswered questions: how can you move a whole group of files without having to do each one individually? How can LocoScript print in two columns? Why is an empty disc sometimes full? How can you split a document into two? Answers to all these, plus a few vital tips you can't afford to be without can be found in these pages. Read on at your pleasure ...

1. Indental surgery

The 'hanging tab' - [ALT] [TAB] - is the single most underrated feature of LocoScript. Suppose you want to get a paragraph like this:

```
NOTES→ 1. The figures
→ given are based
→ on 1989-90.
→
```

This is the effect we want to produce; here we've used an ordinary simple tab

If you put a [RETURN] at the end of each line and a [TAB] at the beginning of the next, the problem is that any sub-

sequent editing which you may go on to do will cause the layout to be completely destroyed. We've all done it and, therefore, all know how irritating this is.

```
NOTES→ 1. The figures
→ given here are
→ based
→ on 1989-90.
```

But as soon as you begin editing, the layout is completely destroyed.

Instead, try inserting a hanging tab - press [ALT] [TAB] - in the first line. This shows as a special sign on screen instead of the usual arrow.

```
→ NOTES→ 1. The figures
→ given are based
→ on 1989-90.
```

The hanging tab looks just like a 'tweaked' simple tab on the screen

The effect is just as if you'd put tabs in front of each line - except that if you now edit the indented paragraph, it obligingly reformats to the right shape:

```
→ NOTES→ 1. The figures
→ given are based
→ on 1989-90.
```

But preserves your indented appearance no matter how much editing you do

2. BASIC superiority

Strange though it, no doubt, sounds, LocoScript can even be used to prepare BASIC listings. If you have ever tried typing in the Listings from 8000 Plus but miss LocoScript's features, such as the cut, copy and paste facilities, then type the listing in using LocoScript.

Save it with the filename PROG.LST, for example, then make an ASCII file of the result called something like PROG.BAS (following the procedure described on the following page in the box entitled 'Be published, not damned'). You can then run up BASIC and run the PROG.BAS listing as normal.

To view or print a BASIC listing called say PROG.BAS in LocoScript, make sure it is saved in BASIC as SAVE "PROG.BAS",A and then insert it into a LocoScript file. (For further information on the subject, read our box over to the right called 'Be published, not damned').

3. Quick addresses

Keep your names, addresses and telephone numbers as a file on your start-up disc in any group called TEMPLATE.STD. This is automatically copied to the M drive when you start up, so it's always available for you to look at by simply editing it, no matter what disc is in the drive.

4. Don't justify your writing

If you use your PCW for writing, don't use justification for any manuscripts that will be read by editors, as the smooth right margins are more tiring to read than normal, ragged ones. Justification should be saved for documents such as business letters where presentation is more important.

5. Copying layouts

Layout codes can be put into phrases, so that if you want to switch to a layout you've used earlier in a document, an easy way to do it is to copy the layout code and paste it in where the layout is to start again.

6. Two things at once

It is possible to print a file at the same time as editing another. While editing your file, press the [F7] key (in LocoScript 2, [F1]) and select the **Disc management** menu option. The editing screen will vanish and you will see the same file directory screen as when you aren't editing a file. Now you can print, move and delete files in the normal way, though they have to be on the same disc - you can't change discs in the middle of editing a document like this. To get back to your edit, just press the [EXIT] key.

If you want to print out a file on disc X while you are editing a file on disc Y, you can't do it. So, first copy the file from disc X to the M drive using [F3] in the disc manager. Then insert disc Y pressing [F1] to notify LocoScript of the change ([F7] in LocoScript 2) and cursor over the file in the M drive to be printed; hit [P] for print. You can now begin editing the file on disc Y while the file on X is being printed out.

7. Jam tomorrow

If your paper jams while printing a LocoScript document, don't switch off! Press [PTR]; this puts you into printer control state and pauses the printer.

LocoScript 2: Press [F7]=**Document**. You have a variety of options, the one you probably want being **Reprint from current page** (though you can abandon printing altogether if you want). Select that one, reload with paper, and press [EXIT] to resume printing.

LocoScript 1: Press [F5]=**Document**. Your options will be to reprint from the current page (**this page**) or the start. Set the option required with the [+] key, reload paper, and press [EXIT] to resume printing. If you want to abandon printing altogether, you want the [F7] option to **Reset**.

A. Two columns

You can't easily print out text in two columns in LocoScript. This is the simplest method. Essentially, you use a single layout for the whole document half a page wide (eg. with a left margin at 10 and a right margin at 47) then print two pages onto one piece of paper, offsetting the second to the right.

LocoScript 1: Create the document and press [F7] [ENTER] [F7] [ENTER] [F1]. Cursor down to the ruler line and set the margins at 10 and 47 using the cursors and [F1] and [F2]. Set any tabs if required. [EXIT] back to the main document.

LocoScript 2: Create the document and press [F2] for **Change layout**. Put in any tabs with the [+] key and set the margins at 10 and 47 using [F1]. [EXIT] [ENTER] and then [EXIT] to the main document.

Printing: Exit the file and save without printing. You feed each sheet of paper in twice and, for each even numbered page, you fool the printer into printing the column over to the right with the **left offset**.

You have to print each page individually. In the disc manager, position the cursor over the file and press **P**. Select **Print some pages** and [ENTER]. From the next menu select the one page you wish to print and

```

1 Pi12 LSI CR40 LP6
f2=Layout f3=Style f4=Size
etc. - are in Honshu.#
b) Hokkaido. Means 'road to the north
sea' but is further south than
Morocco. Japan's dairy products come
from there because it's the only
place where there's room for the
cows, so on the rare occasions when
you see milk, ask if it comes from
Hokkaido and impress everyone with
your knowledge of the country's
agricultural infrastructure.#
c) Shikoku. You can keep any group of
Japanese busy scratching their heads
for hours by asking 'what is Shikoku
famous for?#
d) Kyushu, the southernmost island.
Despite the fact that there are
demonstrably only four large islands
in the archipelago, 'Kyushu' means
'ninth island'. Kyushu is famous for
its sweet tangerines; the word
'satsuma' is the old Japanese name
for that province, so look your host
straight in the eye and say 'sotsumi'

```

Set out your document like this, as one long thin column...

```

management.
document P=Print document
4=Group f5=Document f6=Se
Print part of document
Name: JAPAN .1
First page 1
From page 2
to page 2
Last page 26

```

...then print one page at a time using [P] from the disc manager...

[ENTER]. You are prompted for paper.

Insert some paper and before pressing [EXIT] to com-

```

Idle AS
f6=Left Offset f7=Docu
Left offset 40
Clear offset
Increase offset
Decrease offset
EXIT

```

...set an offset of 40 for even pages, 0 for odd pages...

```

...and you will find yourself with a
perfect two-column output

```

mence printing, follow these instructions.

LocoScript 1: press [F3] (LocoScript 2, [F6]) and set the **left offset** as required.

An offset of 0 prints the left half of the page, and an offset of 40 prints the column on the right half, so you use the former for odd numbered pages and the latter for even.

Then all you have to do is press [ENTER] to take you back to the disc manager screen followed by [EXIT] to print the page.

B. Be published not damned

Many PCWs are used to write for publication. If you send a disc with your articles on to a publisher (as well as the printout, of course), don't just send normal LocoScript files; when the publisher tries to transfer these to their typesetting machine it will come across as half gibberish. Include an ASCII version of the file.

To make an ASCII file Suppose your file is called ARTICLE.DOC. Put the cursor over it and press [F7] (or [F1] in LocoScript 2). Select **Make ASCII file** and [ENTER]. Put the cursor into group 0 of the disc and [ENTER]. Then give a new name for the ASCII version - ARTICLE.ASC, say - and select **Simple text file** and [ENTER]. After a few seconds a new file ARTICLE.ASC appears in group 0.

```

f: group 0/ARTICLE .DOC Making ASCII file.
1=Actions f2=Disc f3=file f4=Group f5=Document f6=Set
Drive A: empty
0k used 0k free 0 files
Make ASCII file
New Name: ARTICLE.ASC
Group: group 0
Drive: B
Old Name: ARTICLE .DOC
Group: group 0
Drive: B
Simple text file
Page image file

```

Making an ASCII file is quick and easy - and makes life easier for your publishers

To view/edit/print an ASCII (or any other) file in LocoScript

Create a new empty file and insert the ASCII file into it. Suppose you want to look at a file called RUBBISH.TXT. Create a new file called RUBBISH.DOC on the same disc, and, in it, press [F7] ([F1] in LocoScript 2) and move down to **Insert text**. Press [ENTER] to go back to the disc manager. Move the cursor over RUB-

BISH.TXT and press [ENTER] twice. The text from the file is inserted into RUBBISH.DOC which can be edited, saved, printed etc. as a normal file. The original RUBBISH.TXT remains on the disc unchanged.

ASCII files can only contain simple text, i.e. abc, ABC, 123. Any layouts fancier than a simple tab will be ignored, as will all italic, bold, size changes and so on. Any fancy characters (foreign accents, Cyrillic, Greek, maths

symbols) are lost too. If you are preparing a text with any of these, don't enter them in LocoScript. Get a list of commands from your publisher which will eventually lead to the effects you want in their typesetting machine, not in LocoScript. For example, they might want you to enter a circumflex as 'a{-}' and e-acute as 'e{/}', so that to enter the word 'pâté' in LocoScript you actually type 'pa{*}te{/}'.

Why the name?

The name 'LocoScript' was named after makers Locomotive (which name was chosen to express a feeling of speed) with the suffix conveying the generation of quality writing from its users.

8. Thick heads

You can get solid headline styles from LocoScript by simply going to the small trouble of overprinting bold letters two or three times, one after the other and slightly offset from each other.

This is done with a combination of setting line spacing to zero for overprinting and insertion of spaces of different sizes before the text to offset the text.

```
(+LSpace0) (+Bold) e
(Centre) (+Pitch17) (+PitchPSD) Bold washes thicker (+Pitch17) e
(Centre) (+Pitch15) (+PitchPSD) Bold washes thicker (+Pitch17) e
(Centre) (+Pitch12) (+PitchPSD) Bold washes thicker (+Pitch17) e
(-LSpace) (-Bold) e
```

This little routine looks complex, but...

Bold washes thicker

...will print out a smart looking extra-bold headline

For example, this rather daunting-looking sequence,

```
[+] LS 0 [ENTER] [+] B [+] P 17
[ENTER] (space) [+] P PS D [ENTER]
headline [RETURN] [+] P 15 [ENTER]
(space) [+] P PS D [ENTER] headline
[RETURN] [+] P 12 [ENTER] (space)
[+] P PS D [ENTER] headline [-] P [-]
```

B [-] LS [RETURN]

will print out the word 'headline' in a thick headline style by virtue of having gone through a double overprint process.

If you have the above sequence stored as a phrase, under H say, the good news is that you can automate the procedure considerably. Type out your headline and make a phrase of this under T say. Then all you have to do is [PASTE]

H and, in place of the word 'headline', [PASTE] T. Your headline is completed.

Remember, if you want to go a step further and centre things, you will need to insert the centre code on each line with a space of pitch 17 immediately after each headline, or else the text won't quite centre properly.

9. Careful recycling

If you use old LocoScript discs as data discs for other programs (SuperCalc, BASIC, Mini Office etc.) reformat them using DISCKIT before using them. Otherwise all the old limbo files might fool CP/M into thinking the disc is getting full; LocoScript uses the space they take up for new files if need be, but CP/M treats them as normal files taking up space in groups 8 to 15. Therefore you can get 'disc full' messages in CP/M when the disc is apparently nearly empty. Reformatting the disc wipes it all clean preventing this.

10. Marginally better

If you set up a layout with different pitch size, you also have to change the margin settings. These are the suggested margin positions for the five standard pitch sizes on A4 paper. The settings give, as near as possible, a 20mm margin to left and right.

Pitch	Left Margin	Right Margin
10	07	73
12	09	89
PS	09	89
15	11	110
17	13	127

To change the margins in a document (which will probably be TEMPLATE.STD so that any further documents created in that group will have the same settings automatically, meaning you only have to do it once!) proceed as follows. First edit the document, then:

LocoScript 1: Press [f7] [ENTER] [f7] [ENTER] then [f1]. Set the pitch to the required figure - type 17 for 17 pitch and so on. End with [ENTER]. Set other options in the line as required - italic, justify and so on. Cursor down to the ruler line. Move the cursor to the required left margin setting indicated above appropriate to your pitch and press [f1], then to the right margin setting and press [f2]. [EXIT] and [ENTER] back to the main document.

LocoScript 2: Press [f2] and select **Change layout**. Set size from [f4] **Size** menu. Move to appropriate position for left margin and press [f1] then [ENTER]. Move to position for right margin then press [f1] and select **Right margin** then [ENTER]. [EXIT] and [ENTER] back to main document.

11. Window dressing

If using window envelopes for letters, the name and address of the recipient on normal A4 paper with no headers should be between lines 7 and 12 inclusive. If you then put the date on line 17 and fold the letter just underneath, the letter will fit in the envelope with the address in the right place for the window. This assumes no headers; for every line in the header, knock one off the line numbers quoted.

12. Splitting documents

Any document growing long - over 10k say - should be split into smaller sec-

C. Labels

Paper: Labels	
Single sheet	
✓ Continuous stationery	
Height	9
Left offset	0
Top gap	0
Bottom gap	2
Ignore paper sensor	
▶ Create new Paper Type	

Defining a new paper type called Labels

f5=Page f6=Printin	
Paper Type	
A4	
A5	
11continuous	
✓ Labels	
▶ Use Paper Type	
Show Paper Type	

Setting the header and footer zones correctly for labels in the document, i.e. making them zero

f5=Page f6=Printing f	
Page layout	
Top gap	0
Header zone	0
Page body	7
Footer zone	0
✓ Fixed footer zone	
Floating footer zone	
Bottom gap	2
Paper length	9

Selecting the right paper type

Assuming you have a file of names and addresses, one to a page, that you want to print on 1 1/2 inch continuous label paper, here's what to do.

LocoScript 1: Press [PTR] to enter printer control state and press [f1] selecting Continuous stationery with [+] and making the form length 9 with the gap length 0. [EXIT] leaves printer control state and you can then print. Make sure the print head is at the top of a label before starting; if things start to print wrong, press [PTR] then [f7][ENTER] to stop printing and then [EXIT]. Realign the paper and start again.

LocoScript 2: 1. In the disc manager insert your start of day disc and set up a new paper type as follows. Select [f6] Settings and choose New paper type. Set the

details as follows: continuous stationery (with [+]), height 9, top gap 0, bottom gap 2. Make the new name Labels. Write these new settings to your start of day disc.

2. In the document with the list of names press [f1] for Document setup and press [f5] Page. First select Page layout and set top gap,

header zone and footer zone to 0. Finish with [ENTER]. Next select Paper type.

Select Labels with [+]. [EXIT] and [ENTER] back to the main document.

3. When printing out, make sure that the paper type selected if you're queried is Paper for document.

David Smith
62 The Boulevard
Anlaby Road
Hull
East Yorks
HU1 7RF

The result prints perfectly onto continuous label paper

tions. Long documents are slow, unwieldy, and you run much more risk of getting 'disc full' error messages. Here's what to do.

Suppose you have a document HUGE.DOC to be split in half. First find the number of pages in it - put the cursor over the document in the disc manager screen and press [P] for Print, selecting **Print some pages**. The number of the Last Page is shown; take note of it and cancel the print instruction with [CAN].

Now copy the whole document to the M drive with [f3] and give the new name as SECOND.BIT or something appropriate.

Edit HUGE.DOC by pressing [E] and move to a halfway point in the text. You want to move to a page halfway through, i.e. roughly half the number of pages shown back in the **Print** instruction above.

In **LocoScript 2** you can do this with [f5], **Find page**; in **LocoScript 1** you just press [PAGE] the appropriate number of times (i.e. three times to move to the top of page four, and so on) and wait for it to scroll through to the required place. To make the break occur at a sensible place rather than the middle of a sentence, you can move the cursor to somewhere appropriate.

Now you can cut out the rest of this document and save just the first half. Press [CUT], then [DOC], then [CUT] again. Wait until LocoScript finishes its stuff and [EXIT], finishing edit. Rename the now truncated HUGE.DOC as FIRST.BIT ([f5] in LocoScript 1, [f3] in LocoScript 2).

Now move over to SECOND.BIT, which is a copy of your old HUGE.DOC of course, and press [E] for Edit. Press [CUT] and move to the same place as your cutting began in the other document. You can do this either by pressing [PAGE] the appropriate number of times, or by pressing [FIND] and giving a short piece of text from around the halfway point. Press [CUT] again and the first half will disappear slowly leaving just the second half of the document. [EXIT] and finish edit; finally move SECOND.BIT back to the same group as the FIRST.BIT ([f4] in LocoScript 1, [f3] in LocoScript 2).

Your old HUGE.DOC is now split into two equal parts, FIRST.BIT and SECOND.BIT.

14. Capital punishment

IS EVERYTHING YOU TYPE APPEARING IN CAPITALS? Three possible explanations.

- 1) You might have accidentally selected **SHIFT LOCK**, in which 'pcw8512' becomes 'PCW*%1'. Get out of this just by hitting the [SHIFT LOCK] key again.
- 2) You could be in **CAPS LOCK** mode, which makes letters upper case and leaves numbers as normal (i.e. 'pcw8512' becomes 'PCW8512'). To enter or leave this mode press [ALT] [ENTER].
- 3) You could be in 'numeric Lock'

D. Mass services

The LocoScript file copy, erase and move commands only handle one file at a time. It can be tedious when you want to move the contents of an entire group to a new disc, or erase an entire group. However, you can use CP/M to do this, in which 'user areas' are similar to LocoScript's group numbers.

Reset your machine either by switching on or by pressing [SHIFT] [EXTRA] [EXIT]. Insert your CP/M disc. After a while you see the A> prompt.

Copying files Suppose you want to copy the files in group 4 of one disc to group 1 of a new disc, 1. Insert your CP/M disc and type PIP [RETURN]. A * shows.

2. Put your old LocoScript disc in drive A and type M:[G1]=A:.*.*[G4] [RETURN].

3. When the copying is finished insert the new disc you want the files copied onto, and type A:[G1]=M:.*.*[G1] [RETURN].

4. Type [RETURN] to leave PIP; the asterisk prompt is replaced by the A> prompt.

You can of course substitute any group numbers in place of 1 or 4,

```
CP/M Plus Amstrad Consumer EI
v 1.6, 61K TPA, 1 disc drive,

A>pip
CP/M 3 PIP VERSION 3.0
*:*[G1]=A:.*.*[G4]

COPYING -
CHAPTER.1
CHAPTER.2
CHAPTER.3
INDEX
*:*[G1]=M:.*.*[G1]

COPYING -
CHAPTER.1
CHAPTER.2
CHAPTER.3
INDEX
*
A>|
```

Moving all the files from group 4 of one LocoScript to group 1 on another using PIP

and they can be the same as each other. You can also substitute drive B for A if you are copying from a B disc to a B disc on a PCW8512.

Erasing files Suppose you want to erase files in group 5. At the A> prompt type USER 5 [RETURN] then ERA *.* [RETURN]. Now you also have to erase the limbo files,

```
A>user 5
SA>era *.*
SA>user 13
ERASE *.* (Y/N)?
13A>era *.*
ERASE *.* (Y/N)?
13A>user 0
A>
```

Erasing all the files from a LocoScript group 5 - and its corresponding limbo files in group 13

which are in the group the normal files are in, plus 8; i.e. for group 5 the limbo files are in CP/M's group 13. So type USER 13 [RETURN] then ERA *.* [RETURN]. Finally type USER 0 [RETURN] to return to the A> prompt. You can do this for any group number other than 4.

Moving files Suppose you want to transfer the files in group 4 of one disc to group 1 of a new disc, because the old disc is too full. Follow the steps for copying above, then erase the files from the old disc.

which is similar to 2) but makes the keys on the right of the keyboard (the numeric keypad) return their numbers and not the cursor movements etc. To leave or enter this mode press [ALT] [RELAY].

15. And finally...

...always take a backup copy of every

file you've changed at the end of each day's work on a separate disc. Discs can fail without warning, losing all those precious files. So keep backups!

● You're in good company if you use LocoScript; with something like 2 million users worldwide, but most in the UK, it's the most popular word processor used by people as opposed to companies.

E. Addressing

A quick way to print the address of the recipient of your LocoScript letters on normal envelopes is as follows. When you have finished the letter, copy the address at the top of the letter into a phrase. (Do this by putting the cursor at the beginning of the name, pressing [COPY], putting the cursor below the bottom of the address, pressing [COPY] again, then any letter such as [A].

At the end of the letter, press [ALT] [RETURN] to start a new page and then paste the address you have just copied to the new page with [PASTE]A (or whatever letter).

Now in front of each line put spaces - or better, tabs with a tab stop set at 30 or so in the layout - to put the address in an appropriate place for the envelope.

When you're printing out the letter, after the end of the letter proper, insert your envelope. Wind the printer round so that the

```
group 0/LETTER .43S Editing text. Printer idle. Using M:
Layout 1 P12 LSI C40 LPS Page 3 line 6/8
ti=actions f2=Layout f3=Style f4=Size f5=Page f7=Spell f8=Options EXT
but unfortunately that will have to wait until Saturday when Dad gets his
artificial hip fitted.
By the way, I saw Mr Williams from next door yesterday, and he says his
wife's aunt, Ethel, has had a colostomy. Did you see George the other day?
I think he's catching meningitis. And young Jason from down the road has
something wrong with him I'm sure. It's not natural to have so many spots.
As for me, I still have trouble with my rheumatism and sciatica. My back is
still playing up and my foot's no better.
Anyway, hope you are keeping well. See you soon.
Best wishes and good health
Mavis
```

The easy way to address envelopes: recycle the address from the beginning and copy into the last page into the right place for the envelope

address will start about the right distance down from the top. Press [EXIT] as usual and the envelope is addressed.

On the PCW 8256 or PCW 8512 dot matrix printers, you

may find that you have to manually help the envelope through the printer with a gentle pulling action to help the paper feeding action; thick envelopes may slew and smudge.

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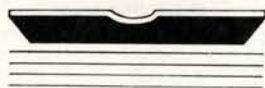
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A Touch of Class

Even the most run of the mill documents deserve a bit of street credibility. This month, Sophie Lankenau takes a look at how Protext's word processing codes can be utilised to make your work stand out from the crowd.

The way a document is presented on the page can make the all the difference to the people who read it. We've looked at the way in which Protext allows you to create a structure for your work, with the use of tabs and ruler lines. The next step is to enhance structural clarity with various aspects of stylistic detail – using Protext's 'word processing codes'.

Word processing codes are instructions which tell Protext how to print text on the page. In LocoScript, the equivalent 'codes' are those which the 'set' and 'clear' (or [+]) and [-]) menus offer; boldening, underlining, double spacing, italicising – these are just a handful of the effects which can be achieved equally well in Protext.

Protext has no 'set' and 'clear' menus. Instead, everything is done via a short keypress sequence. Admittedly, LocoScript allows for this too, once you are familiar with the shorthand versions of the codes on offer. In Protext, however, this kind of 'shorthand' is the order of the day, and the codes must be learned from the outset.

To boldly go...

There are two different kinds of coding in Protext. The first group are known as embedded codes, and are executed by the keypress sequence [ALT][x] n, where n represents the letter of the alphabet relevant to the code which is to be implemented.

The first stylistic effect we are going to look at is the command to embolden text. Bold text is a simple yet effective way of stressing a particular point in a document. This could be anything from a letter or memo heading to a list of dates.

Our document is to be a summary of a company's objectives for the New Year. As you can see from the original printout, the 'raw' document is quite text heavy, and there is nothing which really stands out as being important. We are going to ensure that certain areas of the text will immediately grab reader attention.

The first step is to isolate the areas in question – the first of which, in our document, will be the title of the memo. Move the cursor to the left of the first letter of the first word. You will see that this is at the left margin of the text. Now, press [ALT][X] together. Look to the top banner section of the screen.

Protext asks you to 'Press printer control letter (A-Z)'.

The code for boldening is, as in LocoScript, the letter b. When you type it in, you will notice that it pushes the text to the right by one character, and that the letter is in reverse video – that is, black text on a green background if you've got an 8256 or 8512, and black on white for those of you with a PCW9512.

Although this might look a little off-putting, it will not appear on the printed page, and you will soon be able to ignore it when it appears more than once in a document.

So far, you have simply told Protext where you want the boldening to start. If you do not insert a 'stop' code, everything thereafter in your document will be printed in bold. To cease boldening, move the cursor to the right of the last letter of the word which you want to be highlighted. Press [ALT][X] followed by the letter b, and a second, reverse video 'b' will appear on screen.

Unlike the LocoScript [+]) and [-]) keys which, respectively, implement and undo word processing codes, Protext uses the same keypresses for both functions. This could become a little confusing where many commands are sprinkled throughout one document, and is one area where the logic of LocoScript triumphs over the speed of its cut and thrust rival.

Try boldening other areas of text, such as the point numbers and the signatory's name and position. You will soon get used to the patches of reverse video, and will recognise the commands they represent.

Lean machine

Another useful embedded code is the italicising command. Again, this helps to add extra emphasis to your work, and offers a chance to break away from conventional type styling. In our document, you could italicise every occurrence of the company name; the psychological effect of seeing the corporate tag picked out in such a way has the effect of promoting the company, by making its name stand out in the midst of more humdrum information.

Introducing italics to the text involves exactly the same process as was required for boldening. In fact, all of Protext's embedded codes are

implemented in the same way, the only difference being the actual letter used.

Moving the cursor to the first instance of the company name, place it to the left of the first letter. Now, press [ALT][X] together, and follow that by typing in the letter 'i' for italic. When you want the italics to stop, simply move the cursor to the right of the last letter of the word, and reiterate the [ALT][X][i] command. The text will revert to 'normal' type thereafter.

Altogether, there are six embedded text-enhancing codes in Protext. To underline text, you need to type in the letter 'u' after the [ALT][X] sequence. Try this underneath the memo title at the top of the document. Turn the command on by typing in [ALT][X][U] before the first letter of the name, and stop it at the end of the title by repeating the keypresses after the last letter of the word.

Sub and superscript are the word processing codes beloved of scientists or mathematicians – because of the way that they can make sections of text sit above or below the usual line. This is particularly handy for presenting chemical equations or mathematical formulae.

Our document does not contain any such text, but there is still a way to incorporate the effect all the same. Dates and times can also benefit from this kind of presentation, although only in the superscript form.

Go to the date at the very top of the memo – January 21st 1991. Move the cursor to the s after the figure 21. Now, pressing [ALT][X], type in the letter t. ➤

It's logical!

Protext has no drop down menus to explain the various word processing codes which it has to offer. On the whole, however, the letter used is the first letter of the code to be effected. So, 'i' stands for italic, 'b' for bold, 'u' for underline, and 't' for, er, superscript. We did say on the whole...

However, to be sure that you have all the keypresses at the forefront of your memory, why not jot them down on a piece of masking tape, and attach it vertically to the plastic surround of your monitor. That way, you'll have an instant source of reference when you are first experimenting with codes, and when you reach the stage where you can recite them off by heart, you can unpeel the masking tape, leaving a clean, unmarked monitor.

01b.To double our annual turnover of flammab
reaching record breaking profit levels
02b.To introduce flexi-time for our workers,
provision that they agree to work at the w
03b.To offer a whole extra day's holiday for
served at Burnham Inflammables for more th
04b.To offer a free, all expenses paid brain
Slagheap Hotel, Firesville.

Embedded codes appear on the screen as soon as you implement them. Here, you can see the bold command either side of the figures

Management of [Burnham Inflammables Ltd], I would
welcome to 1991 - our tenth anniversary as
world of the pyrotechnical industry. To
birthday. we have decided to name 1991 as

To italicise words or phrases, the command [ALT][X][i] has to be typed in at either side of the phrase. This turns the effect on and then off.

Exposed!

Inserting all these strange looking codes might well sound clever, but the screen display does not show the effects you have created. To print out a document, simply go into command mode and type in 'print' at the prompt. Selecting 'background printing' means that you can go back and edit a document while another one is being printed out.

Of course, there is a lot more to printing from Protext than the procedure described above. So much so, in fact, that we will be devoting a whole two pages to it in the near future. However, you can at least have a look at the practical effects of your lovingly placed word processing codes by executing this simple command.

Spot the difference

1991 - THE YEAR OF PRODUCTIVITY

On behalf of the management of Burnham Inflammables Ltd, I would like to offer you a warm welcome to 1991 - our tenth anniversary as market leaders in the world of the pyrotechnical industry. To celebrate this important birthday, we have decided to name 1991 'The Year of Productivity'. So, what are the aims of Burnham Inflammables this year?

1. To double our annual turnover of inflammable goods, reaching record breaking profit levels
2. To introduce flexi-time for our workers, with the provision that they agree to work at the weekends
3. To offer a whole extra day's holiday for all workers who have served at Burnham Inflammables for more than nine years
4. To offer a free, all expenses paid brainstorming weekend at the Slagheap Hotel, Firesville.

Here at Burnham Inflammables, we believe that the staff come first. So, with the fantastic plans listed above, we're confident that 1991 will be our most productive year to date. Here's to a Happy New Year!

Bernie Spark
Personnel Manager

Burnham Inflammables & Directors - B Spark, R Ash, O Flame

The original printout of the document. Protext's embedded codes can completely transform it, and make it stand out from the rest

1991 - THE YEAR OF PRODUCTIVITY

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Personnel Manager

Burnham Inflammables & Directors - B Spark, R Ash, O Flame

The finished product. Simple embedded codes draw attention to specific details, and add a more professional touch to your work

It will appear, just like the other codes, in reverse video. Next, move the cursor over to the right of the letter t (the one which is not in reverse video, of course), and repeat the [ALT][X][t] sequence. Although the effect on the screen may look a little crowded, it will produce the desired result on the printed page.

The process for subscript - the effect of having text sitting beneath the line on the page, is implemented in the same way. Unfortunately, there is no call for such an effect in our document. However, if you imagine the chemist's Periodic Table for the earth's elements, with all its symbols, you will at once see how subscript can be put to use in scientific documents.

Spaced out

The final 'embedded' code is the command to proportionally space your text. This means that each letter is allocated a space befitting its size. For example, the letter 'w' takes up a far wider space than the letter 'i' across the page. Proportionally spaced text looks much neater on the page, and will add class to an official document such as the one we are preparing here.

To space text in this way, take the cursor to the beginning of the section to be treated and repeat the (by now)

familiar keypress sequence of [ALT][X]. Now, all you have to do is type in the letter 'p' for 'proportional' (Protext is so logical in its codings!) to the left of the first letter, and then repeat it to the right of the last one to be 'proportionally spaced'. The effect is implemented and stopped accordingly.

By the time you've inserted all these codes, your document will be looking quite unlike anything you would want to see on a printed page. It is much the same as selecting the [f8] option in LocoScript, where choosing the 'show codes' option brings a host of bracketed [+] and [-] instructions to the screen. The only difference in Protext is that those codes are on permanent display, and cannot be removed from the screen while you are at work. Opinion is split fairly equally as to the help or hindrance that the presence of such codes represent. However, do try to remember that the codes are not reproduced on the finished page.

The remaining word processing codes which Protext uses for instruction are also preceded by pressing [ALT][X], followed by the relevant letter of the alphabet. There are five of these, two of which have no opposite number on the LocoScript 'set' and 'clear' menus.

All the remaining codes are connected with the actual 'dimensions' of the text to be printed on the page - that is, the width and standard of print to be employed. The first two can be seen as a pair of opposites - condensed and enlarged text.

All together now

Condensed text could usefully be employed in our document to present company details at the bottom of the page - for example, the name, the directors, the VAT number and so on. The process is the same for all the other codes we have looked at so far. It is simply a case of moving the cursor to the appropriate place on the page and carrying out the keypress sequence once again. The one we need for condensed text is, as logically as ever, the letter 'c'. This must be typed in at the beginning

and the end of the bottom line. With this command installed, even you have the power to introduce the 'small print' common to so many official documents!

The opposite effect - that of enlarged text - can help give extra emphasis to specific words or phrases in a document. So, as well as emboldening our memo heading, we could stretch it out across the page, ensuring that it is the first thing that the reader looks at when they see the document. The command means that text will be printed at half the pitch size currently in use, that is, 5 or 6 characters per inch.

So, repeating the process (which you might well by now be running the risk of chanting in your sleep), move the cursor to the beginning of the heading and press [ALT][X] and then 'l' for enlarged. This is actually one of the few codes which Protext does not give a logical shorthand version to - except if you remember that 'l' stands for large, and concede to a bit of grammatical inaccuracy!

Protext uses 10 pitch - or pica as it is known - as its default setting for character width. LocoScript faithfuls will be more at home with a native setting of 12 pitch. 12 pitch in Protext is known, rather grandly, as 'elite', and is achievable by pressing [ALT][X][e] before the first letter of a word. This sets the character spacing at a width of 12 per inch. If you move into elite and you want to get back to the default setting of 10 pitch, or pica, simply prefix the text with the keypresses [ALT][X][n]. A useful way to remember this is to think of the default, pica, as being 'n' for 'normal' or 'natural', both of which imply the in-built setting.

Finally, the command [ALT][X][q] inserted either side of a word, phrase or sentence, will ensure that Protext prints the text in NLQ (near letter quality) as opposed to the less tidy draft mode.

These small touches can make a world of difference to the simplest of documents - and add extra authority to official work of any kind. Taking a look at our 'before' and 'after' printouts will show you just how great an effect can be achieved.

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On behalf of the management of Burnham Inflammables Ltd, I would like to offer you a warm welcome to 1991 - our tenth anniversary as market leaders in the world of the pyrotechnical industry. To celebrate this important birthday, we have decided to name 1991 as 'The Year of Productivity'. So, what are the aims of Burnham Inflammables this year?

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Bernie Spark
Personnel Manager

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The finished, 'coded' document - a jumble of reverse video commands

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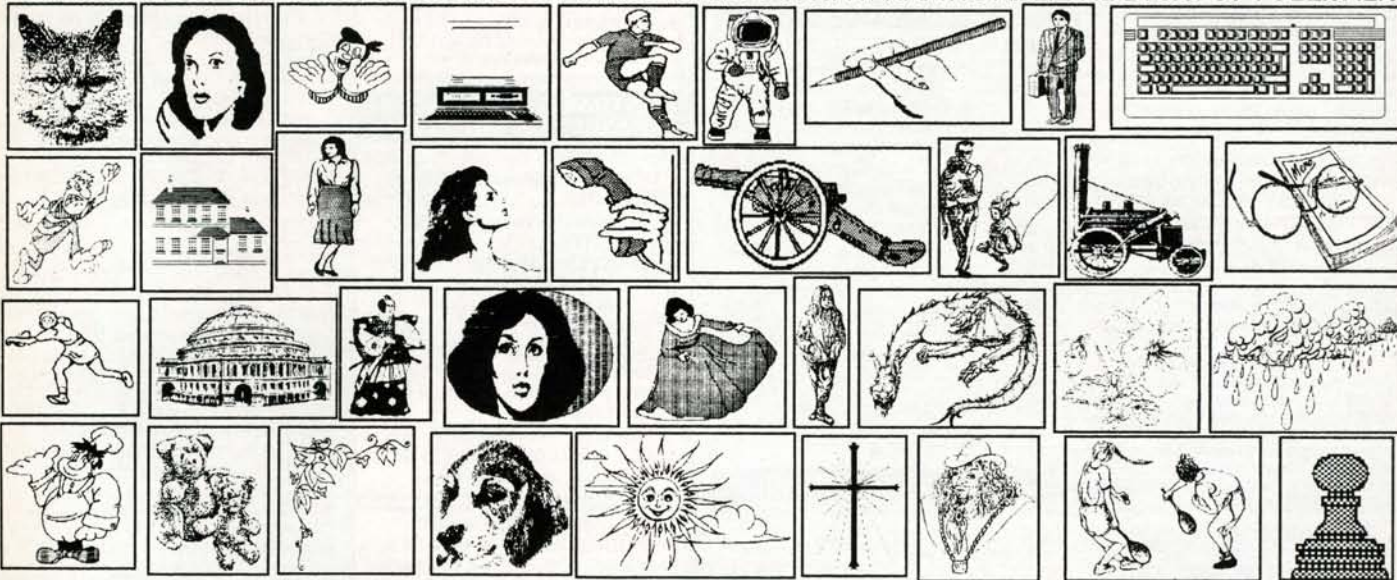
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Codes of Practice

This month, Liz Bruce helps you to decipher LocoScript's word processing codes – the key to producing visually impressive documents

Q I bought an Amstrad PCW 8256 because I wanted to be able to print all the things like underlining, italics, different pitches. However, I find that having to stop typing, remember which menu I want, call it up, make a selection and confirm it breaks my train of thought and slows me down considerably. Recently I saw a reference to "codes" but I haven't been able to find out more about them. Where are they? How do I use them and do I have to remember them?

A I quite agree with you about using menus to select the word processing effects; it's a most inefficient way of doing things and it certainly does slow you down.

When I am teaching someone from scratch, I don't use the menus at all. Here, step by step, is how I teach people to access the effects and I'm sure if you follow this you'll find life greatly improved!

1. The most important thing is that there is only one key to remember – the [+] key. This is the settings key, not the key which gives you a + on the screen. On the 8000 series machines it is at the left of the space bar and on the 9512 it is at the bottom of the function keys at the left. If you simply press this key and wait, a list of effects will appear at the right of the screen. Don't worry if you don't know what they all are, there's an explanation later.

2. You can move up and down this list by using the down and up cursor keys, the arrows. When you are on the effect you want, press [ENTER] and the selection will take effect. The arrows at the bottom of the list just mean there are more effects than there is room for on the screen; to get to them, just keep pressing the down arrow and they will appear, leaving arrows at the top to show there are selections above instead. To finish with the effect, use the [-] key in exactly the same way.

3. So far, to access all the effects, all you have had to remember is to press the [+] key and wait. You can actually make the list appear instantly by pressing the grid key (that's the one which has the little number 2 on the numerical pad at the right). The next thing to notice is that each name on the list has

one or more capital letters and that if you press those keys once the list has appeared, the cursor will jump to that selection automatically. So, if you wanted UnderLine, you would just type in **ul**, (you don't need to use capitals) and then [ENTER].

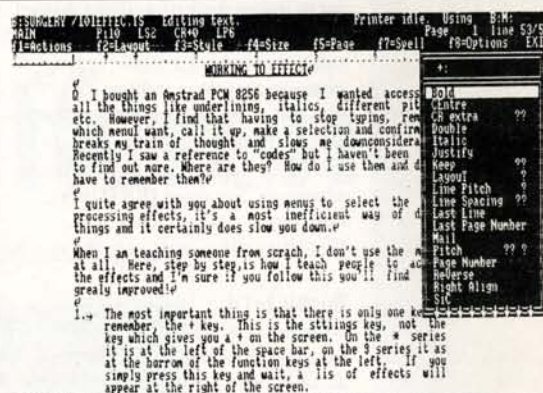
In fact, most of the menus in LocoScript work this way and you may well find that worth knowing. Usually the first letter of the selection will make the cursor jump, but where there is more than one selection with the same first letter, the first two letters will normally do the trick. For instance, if you wanted to run the disc manager while editing text, you would press [f1]. If you just press 'd' nothing will happen, as the first selection is Document Setup which also begins with D, but if you type in 'di' the cursor will jump to the item you want.

4. When you start using the cursor jump in this way, you will still have to press [ENTER] to confirm your choice (although the list will shrink to show just that option). However, if you make your selection without waiting for the list to appear, you will not need to use [ENTER] at all. That's why there is a delay, to give you time to make your selection. So, to select UnderLine, you would just press [+] **ul** and carry on typing, then [-] **ul** when you had finished the underlined section.

Don't worry if you are slow – the list will simply appear. If you are concentrating on the keyboard, you may get a bleep if you think you have entered the code then carry on typing, when in fact, you have been slightly too slow. Again, don't worry. If you look at the screen, you will see the short menu over to the right, and you need only press [ENTER] to confirm the choice.

If you follow this program you will find you pick up the most common codes very quickly, such as [+]i for italics, [+]ul for underline, [+]ce for centre and so on. The nice thing is that if you forget which one you need you can still use the list. This is much quicker than using the menus and soon becomes quite automatic so that it doesn't distract you from the text you are typing at all.

Just one other thing. You will have noticed that some of the selections, such as **Pitch** and **Line Spacing** have question marks after them. This is because



When you press either [+] or [-], this lengthy menu appears...



showing all LocoScript's word processing codes. [CAN] removes it

these items need a number entered to tell the computer exactly what you want. If you use [+] **p** to access the pitch, for instance, the selection 'Pitch' will appear at the top right of the screen with question marks asking for the pitch you require.

So, type in 12 or 15 or whichever you want, then press [ENTER] to confirm your choice. However, you can still make the alteration without waiting for the little menu to appear as long as you remember to press [ENTER] which is always needed when a number is chosen. So, to select Pitch 17, the key strokes would be [+]**p**17 [ENTER].

Q Can you please explain exactly what all the items on the list of word processing codes actually do?

A Certainly. Here's a list, complete

with key strokes to access them the quick way, and an explanation, working from top to bottom. You might like to make a copy and keep it handy until you get used to this way of doing things.

Bold [+] **b**

For extra emphasis

CEnter [+] **ce**

Centres text between margins:

You don't need to use the [-] key to stop this as it cancels automatically when [RETURN] is used.

CR extra [+] **cr**

Carriage return extra. Some people prefer to indent their paragraphs instead of leaving a space. They often like a little extra gap, but not a whole space. For instance, they may want an extra half a line at the end of each paragraph. By setting the carriage return extra to a half, they will get that extra half line whenever they press [RETURN]. Remember you will have to use [ENTER] after you type in the number.

Double [+] **d**

Sometimes people think this is the command for double width pitch, but it is actually short for double strike. It's really the same as bold, but has a slightly different effect depending whether you are using draft or high quality print. The printer adjusts automatically, so don't worry about it.

Italic [+] **i**

Self explanatory!

Justify [+] **j**

Justifies one line, where the whole text is not set to justify. Justification simply means that the text is straight down the right hand side as well as the left.

Keep [+] **k**

Allows you to tell the computer to keep certain lines together at the top or bottom of the page. I have found it is usually simpler, though, to let the text do what it likes and go through the whole thing later putting in page breaks where I want them. This is selection where a number is necessary.

Layout [+] **lt**

Allows you to enter a layout from the stock layouts simply by entering the number of that layout (if you can remember it!). Again, a number is necessary, so you also need [ENTER]

Line Pitch [+] **lp**

Lets you change the line pitch, which is the number of lines printed per inch. Experiment with this before using it in earnest as things don't always print out the way you expect!

Line Spacing [+] **ls**

You can change the line spacing, which is the number of lines left blank between each printed line, by using this plus a number. Remember you can use a

half value. A line spacing of one and a half is particularly suitable for letters, for instance and line spacing 2, or "double spacing" is normally used for reports

Last Line [+] **LL**

Means, in effect, 'make this line the last line on the page'. This is different from putting in an 'End Page Here' sign, as it allows other lines to be put in front of the line marked "Last Line" as long as there is room.

Last Page Number [+] **LPN**

LocoScript allows you to number the pages of an important or confidential document as page 8 of 10, for instance, so that it is obvious if a page is missing. You have to tell the program what that last number should be, as you may have kept a document in different parts. The program will then print the page numbers appropriately. You would normally do this in a header or footer.

Mail [+] **m**

Used to indicate the beginning of a mailmerge command. [-]m indicates the end.

Pitch [+] **p**

Enters the pitch you want. This is measured in characters per inch, so pitch 12 is 12 characters per inch. The printout below shows the actual effects of the varying pitch sizes, but here is a list for reference purposes, together with the key commands for implementing them.

Pitch 17 [+] **p17**

17 characters to the inch, or pitch 17.

Pitch 17 D [+] **p17d**

Double width characters.

Pitch 15 [+] **p15**

15 characters to the inch, or pitch 15.

Pitch 17 [+]	17	This means 17 characters to the inch, or pitch 17
Pitch 17D [+]	p17d	Double width character
Pitch 15 [+]	p15	15 characters to the inch
Pitch 15D [+]	p15d	Double width in Pitch 15
Pitch 12 [+]	p12	12 characters to the inch - the 8000 series default
Pitch 12D [+]	p12d	Double width in Pitch 12
Pitch 10 [+]	p10	10 characters
Pitch 10D [+]	p10d	The largest size

Here you can see the actual effects of LocoScript's character pitch variations.

Pitch 15 D [+] **p15d**

Double width characters in pitch 15.

Pitch 12 [+] **p12**

12 characters to the inch.

Pitch 12 D [+] **p12d**

Double width characters in pitch 12.

Pitch 10 [+] **p10**

10 characters per inch.

Pitch 10 D [+] **p10d**

The largest size of all.

Page Number [+] **pn**

Tells the program to number the pages, usually in a header or footer. Remember

you can also set the first page number to whatever you wish and the pages will be numbered consecutively from that number. So, you can keep things like large reports or books split up into smaller documents and still keep the page numbering correct.

Reverse [+] **rv**

Has no effect on the printout, but prints black on green on the screen. Useful to draw your attention to things which have to be changed, for instance in form letters.

Right Align [+] **ra**

Called Right Justify in LocoScript 1, this effect prints the text from the right hand margin instead of the left, like this:

This is right aligned.

Useful for dates and addresses.

SiC [+] **sc**

Marks a word as spelled correctly so it is ignored by the spell checker. It is particularly useful in front of names which you know the spell checker will query.

SubScript [+] **sb**

Prints half size characters dropped half a line. The effect is useful for scientific or mathematical phrases, such as H₂O, where the 2 is in subscript.

Superscript [+] **sp**

As above, but above the line instead of below. For example, in 789 to the power 5, (789⁵) the 5 can be put into superscript for definition.

UnderLine [+] **ul**

Underlines everything, including spaces between words.

Word underline [+] **w**

Underlines only the letters themselves,

not the spaces in between. Cancelling this is a little confusing; for some reason, the cancel is not [-] w but [-] ul.

Unit [+] **ut**

Puts a marker in the text which you can then jump to by using the [UNIT] key ([PARA] with [SHIFT]). Particularly useful if you are using find/exchange and wish to return to where you started after the routine is complete.

That's all there is to it! In general, all these effects or codes are reversed by typing in [-] followed by the implementing code. You will soon become accustomed to the shorthand in play, and will be using LocoScript's codes regularly.


```

A: group 0/JAMESON . Editing text. Printer idle. Using A: M:
Layout 1 PIPS LSI CR=0 LP6 Page 1 line 3/54
F1=Actions F2=Layout F3=Style F4=Size F5=Page F7=Spell F8=Options EXIT

Mr T Jameson
Feasts and Favourse
42 The Drive
Combeslye
Dear Time
(Entre)
(*UL)Old Combesians Dinner (-UL)*
Thanks for being so helpful regarding our requirements for the
annual dinner of the Old Combesians. We would like you to
provide the catering in the club house as discussed.
In detail we shall need:
+ Roast Turkey+ 5+ £14.95+ £74.75+
+ Roast Pork+ 10+ £16.95+ £169.50+
+ Vegetarian Casserole+ 2+ £13.50+ £27.00+
+ TOTAL+ 17+ £271.25+
Please confirm that the 18th will be suitable - it is (*italic)most
important(-italic) that we can organise everything for that evening.
I look forward to hearing from you.
Yours sincerely

```

Typed using LocoScript
on an Amstrad PCW8256

Spot the Difference

```

C:\VADUERT.NAH\JAMESON Editing text. Printer idle. Using C:
Layout 1 PIPS LSI CR=0 LP6 Page 1 line 1/54
F1 F2=Layout F3=Style F4=Size F5=Page F7=Spell F8=Options F9 F10

Mr T Jameson
Feasts and Favourse
42 The Drive
Combeslye
Dear Time
(Entre)
(*UL)Old Combesians Dinner (-UL)*
Thanks for being so helpful regarding our requirements for the
annual dinner of the Old Combesians. We would like you to
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+ TOTAL+ 17+ £271.25+
Please confirm that the 18th will be suitable - it is (*italic)most
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Fiery orb combines with what never passes between friends to create an intellectual challenge for a seven year old (3,9). If you don't know the answer to that but would like to, you are probably the person to invest in the latest Sun Computer Crossword.

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For the beginner, the documentation accompanying the program will be as useful as the program. In the manual, Edmund Akenhead, former Editor of the Times Crossword and the compiler of these discs, has made a stab at explaining the convoluted workings of the crossword compiler's brain (now there's a frightening thought). There is a full explanation of every clue in the first puzzle on the disc and a pretty comprehensive list of abbreviations sure to be appreciated by any crossword addict.

And it does provide you with around 25 real cryptic clues for each puzzle - and they're not the nasty synonym ones you get with those 'coffee break' puzzles.

The problem is that, having mastered the art, would you find the Sun

crossword enough of a challenge to plough your way through all 60 puzzles on the disc?

Admittedly this is volume four, which presumably means that the other volumes have sold well enough to warrant a fourth being produced.

Who are these people?

But it is quite difficult to work out who

can time how long you take and give you a score for how many clues you got right. But again does this appeal to the average Sun crossword solver?

You may begin

Timing how long it takes to complete a puzzle is only really worthwhile if you can hope to achieve some kind of kudos from it all.

The Sun Crossword 2 Score **1300**

1	W	2	A	3	T	4	C	5	H	6	A	7	N	8	D	9	S	10	S
	B		A		I		O		U		M								
8	B	9	U	10	R	11	N	12	L	13	O	14	R	15	D	16	S	17	A
	S		E		A		M		T		S								
10	M	11	I	12	N	13	D	14	E	15	R	16	A	17	P	18	A	19	C
	U								Y		E		N		I				
13	R	14	E	15	A	16	M	17	S	18	K	19	N	20	I	21	F	22	E
					A		B		I		D				O				
19	L	20	E	21	S	22	S	23	E	24	E	25	I	26	N	27	F	28	O
	R		T		A		A		A		A		T						
23	R	24	E	25	L	26	I	27	E	28	U	29	E	30	D	31	L	32	O
	C		F		E		E		L		N								
	T		F		O		R		M		M		A		S		T		

Time 4 min 51 sec Score : 1300
 Clues solved 26 / 26
 Computer aided 0
 Press any key to continue ... EXPERT

A typical Sun crossword which, as you can see, has been completed in 4 minutes, 51 seconds without any help from the PCW at all. It's official: expert status has been reached!

is actually buying them. People tackle a crossword for two reasons: either they want a challenge or they've some time to kill. Without trying to sound superior about this, it must be admitted that Sun crossword compilers seem to be aiming more for the latter than the former.

It is, on the other hand, perfectly understandable that crossword addicts should flock to buy a disc like the other offering reviewed on this spread: the Times Computer Crossword (volume four). But would the person who enjoys filling in a few spare moments of a tea-break or a boring half hour on the train doing the Sun crossword, sit down of an evening in front of a PCW and put in the concentration and dedication needed to complete a puzzle at one sitting? You can't fold up your PCW and slip it in your pocket for when you get a spare moment.

One of the major selling points of a computerised crossword puzzle is that it

If you can enter the Times crossword competition and complete each puzzle in an average four minutes 11 seconds, you will, almost certainly, find yourself being interviewed by the BBC. Go into work tomorrow and announce "Hey everybody! I completed the Sun crossword last night in 12 minutes 23 seconds" and you could get a few strange looks.

Timing each puzzle also puts a strange pressure on you, quite in conflict with the whole ethos (anagram of 'those') of Sun crosswords. You can live with taking one and a half hours to complete the Times crossword. Take the same time over a Sun version and you might well - justifiably - contemplate suicide.

It means that, once started, you dare not leave your green screen for as much as a cup of coffee just in case -- Heaven forbid - you should take more than half an hour to complete the puzzle. ●

Sun Crossword

Pluses

- ▲ A great way to learn how to do cryptic crosswords
- ▲ You don't need to buy the Sun to do the crossword.

Minuses

- ▼ Not a great intellectual challenge
- ▼ Not as classy as doing the Times crossword
- ▼ It's the wrong crossword to take this seriously

Challenge	2/5
Addictiveness	2/5
Ease of use	4/5
Documentation	5/5

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Value Verdict 13/20

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It is, however, when you get to the Times disc that these computer crosswords actually begin to come into their own. Unlike the first disc of Sun puzzles that we looked at, there definitely exists a breed of crossword buffs who would, quite happily, sit down at their PCW of an evening and practice doing a Times crossword against the clock.

There is a real feeling of achievement to be gained in completing each puzzle; an even greater feeling of accomplishment settles over you, however, whenever you succeed in securing a good score or an 'expert' rating. And, of course, because of the numerous advantages which computer technology inevitably brings your way, you now stand a far greater chance of being able to reach that expert rating even if you have never been able to complete a Times crossword in your life.

This is largely due to one particular feature of the program called 'marking'. It allows you to make some attempt at an answer. The computer will enter any correct letters to get in the right place.

This is a particularly effective way to cheat. If you are not too worried about your speed, you could conceivably sit for hours trying every combination of the letters in an anagram (or whatever) until you chance on the right word.

It also means that if an answer is made up of two or more words, you can enter the parts that you do know, making the solution of the crossing clues that much easier.

I've started so I'll finish

This does mean that, for once in your life, you can be absolutely sure that every answer is correct - a feeling you very seldom get when attempting the old newspaper version.

The other really welcome factor is

We don't make mistakes

At first glance, the Sun and the Times crossword programs seem to have quite a lot in common. In fact, the only real difference between them is that you, the user, needs 30 or 40 points more on your IQ to complete the latter of the two.

The format is basically the same for both programs. You are asked to enter the number of the particular crossword you would like to tackle. It's worth bearing in mind, at this point, that there are about 60 on each disc, so always try and keep track of the last one you successfully completed. You can choose a solo game or a team game. The solo game times you and gives you a score based on how many answers you get right and how often you have asked the computer for help in solving a clue.

The team game allows two sides to take turns in answering clues, keeping track of each score. It sounds a good idea but because of the way that crossword clues vary in difficulty, in reality it can turn out to be a game of total chance.

The program quickly and efficiently produces a crossword. You then choose the number you want to answer. The clue appears and you have the chance to take a guess at the answer.

One major advantage is that you can never totally mess up. You cannot enter a wrong answer. At each attempt, the computer either accepts it (and puts up your score) or rejects it completely. Compare this with the old pen and paper version where putting the wrong answer to 1 across can totally

screw you up for the rest of the exercise. You also never need to be stuck. If you just cannot 'get' a clue, you can ask for help. For a start, if you think you have part of the clue but not the whole word (or words), you can make an attempt and the computer will tell you if you get any letter in its proper place. For this service, however, you lose 10 points from your score. If you still cannot get it, you can ask for a clue. This takes the form of a couple of letters that are considerably more cryptic than any clue. These will tell you that the answer is either Ab (an abbreviation) le (legal terminology) or Vu (vulgar). A list in the manual explains what they all mean. This is frankly about as helpful as having the clue translated into Sanskrit. If you cannot get an answer, it is not particularly helpful to be given the clue 'Cs' or, as the manual helpfully explains, that there is a 'Concealed solution in the clue'.

With the Times disc, this is the end of all help but the Sun version does go on to give you another 'coffee-break' simple synonym clue. With each clue, you lose another 10 points.

If you still can't get it (hopefully this will not apply to too many 8000 Plus readers) you can even ask for the solution. But be warned. This actually subtracts 30 points from your score.

At the end of the ordeal, the computer tells you your score, the length of time it took you to complete the puzzle and a rating from 'beginner' to 'expert'. The question is whether you could ever really face your PCW again if you got a 'beginner' rating for the Sun crossword?

that, for the first time, you can also be completely sure of finishing the task before you, even if it means, if the worst comes to the worst, demanding the last few solutions from your PCW.

After all, it is many thousands times better to instantly get the answer to a clue that has stumped you for 20 min-

utes, than wait for tomorrow's paper. This exercise, perhaps more than any other, will teach you very valuable lessons about the more obscure corners of the compilers' mind.

The price you pay

There are a couple of small penalties which you must pay for this, however. For instance, you can only ever see one clue at a time. As crossword buffs often depend on the ability to inter-relate clues that cross each other, this can be quite a frustrating feature until you get used to it.

Similarly, for those of you who really take the speed trials seriously, you will never, with your PCW, achieve the speeds that you can attain using a good old-fashioned pen and paper. At top speed you could get quite frustrated with the amount of time it takes to get to the point where you can actually enter your answer.

And, finally, the PCW is not packed with interesting and informative up-to-date news stories from all over the world and is not at all suitable for wrapping up chips. But there are few better ways to learn how to tackle the Times crossword or to improve your speed. ●

The Times Crossword 2 **Score 1600**

1	S	2	O	M	3	E	4	T	5	I	6	A	7	E	8	S	9	C	10	H	11	U	12	C	13	K	
14	U	15	O	16	U	17	A	18	U	19	H	20	N	21	U	22		23		24							
25	B	26	O	27	U	28	N	29	C	30	E	31	R	32	R	33	O	34	A	35	D	36	B	37	E	38	D
39	A	40	N	41	K	42	A	43	R	44	S	45	I	46	O												
47	L	48	O	49	T	50	U	51	S	52	B	53	E	54	E	55	S	56	T	57	I	58	N	59	G	60	S
61	T	62	H	63	O	64	Y	65	E	66	D																
67	E	68	P	69	I	70	L	71	O	72	G	73	U	74	E	75	T	76	I	77	E	78	R				
79	R	80	U	81	P	82	T	83	C	84	P	85	N	86	I												
87	N	88	A	89	Y	90	S	91	H	92	O	93	O	94	L	95	I	96	G	97	A	98	N				
99	L	100	T	101	F	102	N	103	E	104	O	105	L	106	I	107	G	108	A	109	N						
110	S	111	H	112	E	113	P	114	H	115	E	116	R	117	S	118	C	119	O	120	M	121	I	122	C		
123	E	124	A	125	E	126	A	127	O	128	T	129	U	130	R												
131	P	132	A	133	G	134	E	135	B	136	O	137	Y	138	M	139	I	140	R	141	A	142	N	143	D	144	A
145	I	146	U	147	E	148	E	149	M	150	U	151	R	152	F												
153	A	154	U	155	E	156	R	157	S	158	D	159	R	160	E	161	A	162	M	163	B	164	O	165	A	166	T

Time 5 min 31 sec Score: 1600
 Clues solved 32 / 32
 Computer aided 0
 Press any key to continue ...

This Times crossword is bigger with a total of 32 clues being offered for the contemplation of the user. This one took a little longer to crack - but we're still experts!

THE Sun



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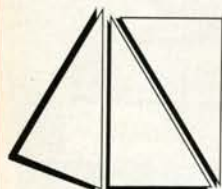
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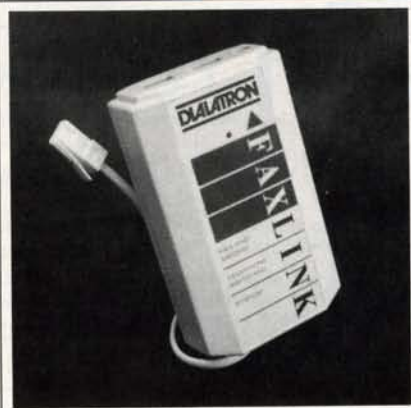
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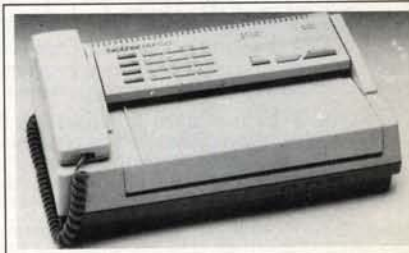
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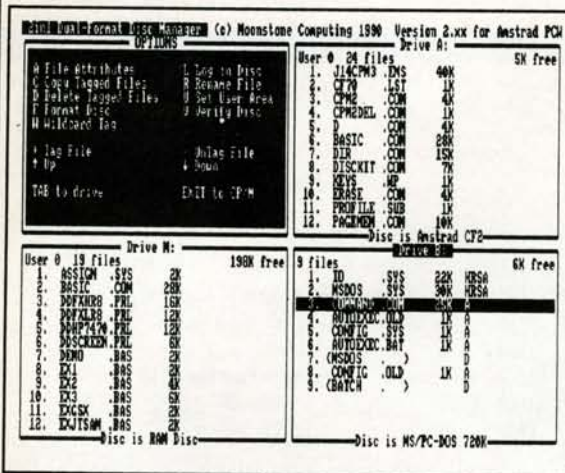
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The Mighty Macro

Are you tired of repetitive typing? Don't you occasionally wish you could murmur to your PCW those immortal words, "Play it again, Sam"? Well, with the help of a few Cracker II commands you can do just that

Cracker has a tendency to hide its light under a bushel. It is far cleverer than most users imagine, even in their fonder moments. This tutorial exposes those innermost talents: we will be showing you how, at long last, you can go macro.

The term macro can lead to some confusion among the PCW fraternity. That authoritative tome on our mother tongue – the Oxford English Dictionary – defines the term "macro-" as "long, large, large-scale." To your PCW, how-

ever, a macro is a stored list of commands that, when retrieved, replays the commands, hence saving you from the onerous task of retyping.

Sounds useful? Well, this is how it is done...

And that's an order!

This month we will look at improving the working routine of one busy Cracker fan: Mr Graham. He runs a stationery business, providing envelopes and paper to the newsagents of West Kent. The pricing details are all stored, using Cracker II, in a table, and he uses this to price up each of his customer's orders.

He has, however, realised that pricing-up, although a simple process, is also a repetitive one: performed for each of his products several times a month. Exactly the same technique is used each time, so why not automate this oft-repeated task, and make life a little bit simpler?

Before we do this, let's take a look at Mr Graham's existing system, shown in our first screenshot. This particular spreadsheet is used solely to order envelopes. There is a price list for various quantities of envelopes at the top of the spreadsheet. As you can see, the products are priced on a sliding scale. This means that if a customer buys 2000 envelopes rather than 200, they are sold at a reduced rate – 10% cheaper to be precise. The discount given on the larger orders is shown in the third column of the table.

The formulae used to calculate the standard price list are nothing new. For example, the price of 1000 envelopes is worked out by taking the price of one envelope (found in cell B14) and multiplying it by 1000 (found in cell A8). The discount of 5% is then subtracted to give the final price.

The actual orders, relating to each customer, are entered below – in the quantity column – and the corresponding prices are worked out automatically by Cracker. Given that there is a price list above, the most obvious approach is to look up the customer's order in this table. In fact, this is exactly what Cracker does, courtesy of one of the special table-handling commands.

It is worth noting that, in this partic-

ular case, the actual quantities ordered by the customers may not have an exact counterpart within the table. In such a case, Cracker must be able to work out an appropriate price from the information given.

So how does Cracker work out the prices for individual customers? Let's take a look at the second screenshot to see Cracker in action. For example, Winford Stationary, ordered 800 envelopes. This is not one of the values in the table but, because the price of 500 envelopes is set as £20, and 1000 envelopes is set as £38, it can use these two figures as guidelines, and sets the price of 800 envelopes as £30.80.

This piece of Cracker cleverness is a result of the INTERP command. The formula in cell C21 is **INTERP (B21,A6...A12)**. This takes the value stored in B21, and compares it to the first row of the table (defined as A6 to A12). The price is set proportionally, using the standard prices in the adjacent column. The resulting customer price is then displayed in cell C21.

The next step

Tables are obviously an important part of Mr Graham's spreadsheet. The INTERP function provides him with quite a sophisticated system, but as an experienced Cracker fan, he now wants one that is even more finely tuned to his requirements: one he can use quickly and easily.

There is, however, another, even more crucial reason for his desire to automate. As a busy man, he likes to delegate the more routine administrative tasks to his staff. The problem is that Cracker is not the easiest program for a beginner to get to grips with.

Unless, of course, a specially adapted spreadsheet deals with the task in hand. He wants a pricing system for A4 paper, A5 paper and envelopes, suitable for any one of his staff.

Quantity	Price (£)	Discount (%)
0	0.00	0
200	8.00	0
500	20.00	0
1000	38.00	0
2000	34.20	10
5000	1,600.00	20

CUSTOMER	QUANTITY	TOTAL PRICE
J.P. Newsagent	500	20.00
Paper Chase	100	4.00
Searton's	850	32.80
Winford Stationary	800	30.80

This combination of price list and customer list is how Mr Graham works out how much to charge for each order

Quantity	Price (£)	Discount (%)
(0)	(7) (B14*A6 - (C6 X (B14*A6)))	(0)
(200)	(5) (B14*A7 - (C7 X (B14*A7)))	(0)
(500)	(5) (B14*A8 - (C8 X (B14*A8)))	(0)
(1000)	(4) (B14*A9 - (C9 X (B14*A9)))	(5)
(2000)	(3) (B14*A10 - (C10 X (B14*A10)))	(5)
(5000)	(2) (B14*A11 - (C11 X (B14*A11)))	(10)
(50000)	(1) (B14*A12 - (C12 X (B14*A12)))	(20)

CUSTOMER	QUANTITY	TOTAL PRICE
J.P. Newsagent	(500)	(11) (INTERP(B18,A6...A12))
Paper Chase	(100)	(10) (INTERP(B19,A6...A12))
Searton's	(850)	(9) (INTERP(B20,A6...A12))
Winford Stationary	(800)	(8) (INTERP(B21,A6...A12))

And this is how it is all done. The INTERP function is used to find the TOTAL PRICE for the quantity ordered, in the price list above

We are going to show him, and you, how to transform his current spreadsheet: firstly by creating one standard spreadsheet for the range of products, and secondly, by automating all of the main functions. For example, typing in two characters will choose which price list to work from, typing in another two characters will save the results.

And, just in case the vital two characters are forgotten, the new spreadsheet will also include instructions for use. Find out how to make Cracker more user-friendly over the page. The first step is to create a standard spreadsheet, so that there is only ever ➤

Play it again, Sam

JC11@.			
outside worksheet			
Next:			
INSTRUCTIONS			
1.	To enter your first value type #1 [RETURN]		
2.	To enter subsequent values type #2 [RETURN]		
3.	To load envelope price list type #3 [RETURN]		
4.	To load A4 price list type #4 [RETURN]		
5.	To load A5 price list type #5 [RETURN]		
6.	To SAVE your entries type #7 [RETURN]		
7.	To quit the program type #8 [RETURN]		
CUSTOMER			
QUANTITY		PRICE (€)	
J.P. Newsagents			
Paper Chase			
Searton's			
Winford Stationers			

Price list - envelopes			
ABCDEF GHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ (+-V), (* arrows			
Next:			
Price list - envelopes			
Quantity		Price	Discount%
0		0.00	0
200		8.00	0
500		20.00	0
1000		38.00	0
2000		76.00	0
5000		180.00	10
50000		1,600.00	20
Cost per item		0.04	

A	
1	JC11@.
2	D.
3	CFENVEL.MEM@JB17@*A6@
4	CFA4.MEM@JB17@*A6@
5	CFA5.MEM@JB17@*A6@
6	JD11@.INTERP(C11,B21.B27)@CE3@D@Y@
7	CBB9.D30@F
8	Q@
9	

The macro instructions, shown above, are stored in the A column of the customer spreadsheet (above left). They are hidden from view by the width of the column - which is only one character wide. The macros themselves can be used to perform all kinds of feats, such as loading the envelope price list opposite, calculating the resulting price for individual customer orders or saving the results in a file.

one spreadsheet to load. Since the customer list is always the same, no matter which product is being ordered, we made this the starting point. The price lists can then be kept in separate files, and loaded as required into the standard spreadsheet.

The standard spreadsheet is shown in our first screenshot, above. The envelope price list is stored in a file called ENVEL.MEM, and shown in our second screenshot. Similarly, the corresponding files for A4 and A5 paper can be called A4.MEM and A5.MEM.

What we now need to do is automate the whole process of pricing orders. This involves four distinct steps. Firstly, the user needs to fill in the quantity column in the standard spreadsheet. Then the relevant price list needs to be loaded, and the calculations performed. Finally, the results should be saved into a file, and the user can quit from the program.

All of these tasks require a certain amount of Cracker know-how, which we are going to incorporate into our

macro instructions.

Filling in the details is, in fact, almost too simple to be worth automating, especially for an experienced user. However, since Mr Graham does expect complete beginners to use the spreadsheet, we decided to go ahead.

The first entry would be at the top of the Quantity column, so a good beginning would be to Jump to this position, cell C11. This is normally achieved by typing in the sequence [J]ump C11 [RETURN] followed by a [.] to enter the number. This simple sequence is going to become our first macro instruction. What this means is that we are going to save the sequence of key-presses outlined above.

Macro-batics

To save a macro command within your spreadsheet, it should be entered into a cell as text. To do this, first move to the cell A1. The format of the A column should be Left Aligned Text. Then press [.] and type in JC11@. [RETURN]. Don't miss out the dot. The @ character incidentally represents a [RETURN] key press. Now, to run this command, all you need to do is type in *1 [RETURN], and the cursor will automatically jump to the correct position.

The only place where a macro command can be saved is in the first 9 cells of the A column. We made this column only one character wide, so that the macros are hidden from view. To see them in their entirety, take a look at the diagram next to our first screenshot.

After the user has filled in the first entry, next on the agenda would be to move down to the next entry in the column and fill in the relevant details. This can be represented by the sequence [D]own [.] so enter this into A2 by typing [.] followed by D. [RETURN]. For each value entered, all the user then has to do is type *2 and the message Enter characters appears. The user then simply types in the entry

and presses [RETURN]. To enter another entry, press *2 again. Once all of the entries have been completed, it is time to actually perform the calculations.

Load up!

The macros so far have incorporated very straightforward instructions - moving and entering text. The next series of commands, however, are rather more complicated and macros are an ideal way to simplify the task.

Once the entries are made, the user has a choice. There are three different price lists available: envelopes, A4 paper and A5 paper. For example, to load the envelope price list, into the spreadsheet beginning at location B17 the sequence [C]opy [F]ile envel.mem [RETURN] [J]ump B17 [RETURN] would be typed in.

The corresponding sequence, entered as a macro into A3, is CFA4.mem@JB17@. The macro commands to load the A4 and A5 price lists are saved in the next two cells and work in the same way. The final command in these three macros is, in fact, to call another macro (*A6).

A6 contains instructions to enter the formulae into the price column. Cracker is told to jump to D11 then enter the first formula, and copy this down the column. This translates into the macro text JD11@.INTERP(C11,B21.B27)@CE3@D@Y@.

Finally the user need to save the results of the calculation. The sequence required to do this is [C]opy [B]lock A5.D14 [RETURN] [F]ilename so the text CBA5.D14@F is saved in cell A7. When the user types in *7 and chooses a filename, the information is saved.

A9 is dedicated to quitting the program, incorporating the sequence, [Q]uit [RETURN] by the text Q@.

The instructions are the finishing touch to an easy-to-use system. Each one is entered into a cell of the format type Heading.

To put Cracker onto automatic pilot and test out this system, simply follow the instructions. Typing in *1 moves the cursor to the starting point, ready to accept the first entry. Entering *A2 allows a subsequent entry to be made. The third instruction, however, is the most impressive. Typing *3 causes the envelope price-list to flow elegantly into position, and the required results appear magically on the screen. The resulting spreadsheet can be seen in our last screenshot.

The relevant section, from the cell B9 to the cell D30, needs to be saved as a separate file. To do this, just type *7 followed by a filename. Finally, type in *9 to quit the program.

Since all the instructions are included, the only information Mr Graham needs to impart to his staff is how to load the standard spreadsheet. The rest should be plain sailing! ●

The Result

```

6. To quit the program type #8 [RETURN]
ABCDEF GHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ (+-V), (* arrows
Next:
A B C D
1 INSTRUCTIONS
2 1. To enter your first value type #A1 [RETURN]
3 2. To enter subsequent values type #A2 [RETURN]
4 3. To load envelope price list type #A3 [RETURN]
5 4. To load A4 price list type #A4 [RETURN]
6 5. To load A5 price list type #A5 [RETURN]
7 6. To SAVE your entries type #A7 [RETURN]
8 7. To quit the program type #A8 [RETURN]
9
10 CUSTOMER QUANTITY PRICE (€)
11 J.P. Newsagents 500 20.00
12 Paper Chase 100 4.00
13 Searton's 850 32.60
14 Winford Stationers 800 30.80
15
16
17 Price list - envelopes
18
19 Quantity Price Discount%
20
21 0 0.00 0
22 200 8.00 0
23 500 20.00 0
24 1000 38.00 0
25 2000 76.00 5
26 5000 180.00 10
27 50000 1,600.00 20

```

The resulting spreadsheet is a breeze even for an inexperienced user

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BOOK LOOK

SUCCESSFUL COMPUTING IN A SMALL BUSINESS by Brenda Wroe

£14.95 • NCC Publications
ISBN 0 85012 589 8

Value Verdict = Very good

The in-tray is overloaded, the back bedroom is strewn with paper, the accounts will have to wait until a rainy day. This is the kind of situation which small businesses everywhere are facing on a daily basis. With the plethora of reasonably-priced computer equipment currently on the market, and the glossy media exposure which such tools attract, the question of whether or not to commit all to disc is one on the minds of many an entrepreneur. The main problems are lack of knowledge and a fear of the unknown.

Brenda Wroe has produced her book to answer almost every query likely to trouble the sleep of the businessman who is deciding whether or not to take the technological plunge.

The whole process is, aptly enough, likened to a journey. "Where do you want to be?" suggests the author. "Where are you now? How else could you get there? Which is the best way?" The analogy is a good one (although there is no mention at that stage of what the fare will be), and in its own right, represents half the battle involved in making the break.

Straight talking

The author begins by taking a broad overview of the role of the computer in a small business. The chief objectives of the book are explained here: its intention to demystify basic computer terminology, to look at the various ways in which a computer can be of help to a small business, and, interestingly enough, to look at the drawbacks of new technology. Brenda Wroe is not a front woman for any computer manufacturer, and has the foresight to warn her readers that computerising might not be the answer to the administrative tangles of the struggling one-man band.

This impartiality is just about par for the course, and makes for a refreshing, frank summary of the issues discussed. There follows a chapter on computing concepts; what is meant by hardware, software, data and communications? – all grist to the mill of the uninitiated.

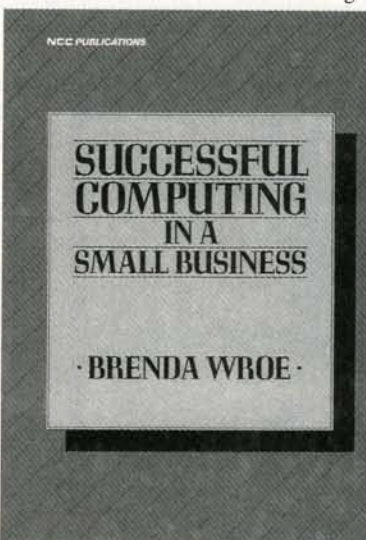
One of the main areas of mystery surrounding the technophobe is how a computer can be employed in a specific area of running a business. How can a

computer look after accounts? How does the software work, and is it going to be as reliable as the tried and trusted shoebox method? The section on applications looks at all these areas from the point of view of the novice.

The bare essentials.

The ideas are presented in an easily digestible form for the businessman or woman; if they are familiar with the 'applications' which their non-computerised set-up requires (such as sales and purchase ledger, payroll, stock control, production schedules) then the necessary software may not sound quite so foreboding.

With the comfort of this knowledge,



Successful Computing in a Small Business
by Brenda Wroe

the reader is then treated to a summary of the requirements of a given system. This involves analysing the efficacy of the system that currently governs the business in question. Knowing what features you wish to retain and what extra ones you are looking for in a computer-controlled environment will arm you with labour- and cost-saving ammunition against the eager salesmen in your local supplier's shop.

The book is punctuated with helpful case studies, detailing differing needs, resources and requirements from company to company. These form a helpful picture of just what must be considered.

Although this book is a mere 190 pages in length, no stone is left unturned. Thanks to a no-nonsense delivery, a clean approach to the issues and a very detailed contents page, the information which you need is both accessible and easily assimilable.

The author also takes a look at the 'human' side of the decision to computerise – the question of how easily staff will adapt and become proficient at using the new system. This is a very important area for consideration; after all, if the business proprietor is not entirely sure whether a computer system is a good idea, those in his or her employ could be even less convinced. So Wroe presents a breakdown of the training schedule for the company, considering who should be trained and when it might be woven into the working day.

The appliance of science

System selection and application dealt with, Wroe goes on to look at implementation. After all, dissecting the theoretical considerations of becoming computerised will not ease the blow of coming face to face with that monitor when it is taken out of the box. The author covers matters such as the compilation of master files, designing of forms, the use of codes to speed up data entry and retrieval – in short, all the things which the salesman will have the time to spend explaining to you.

The chapter entitled 'Live Operation at Last' looks at the considerations to be borne in mind once a system has been in operation for a number of months. By this stage, the business owner is in a position to analyse and evaluate the system which has been chosen. Is it living up to its expectations? How could it be adapted or expanded to encompass all the requirements of the company? Are staff responding well to training? Wroe likens the process to tuning the engine of a car, examining areas of inefficiency and identifying possible improvements.

The book concludes with a series of more detailed case studies, looking at the problems and levels of success encountered by fictitious companies at every stage dissected within the book. Each study is rounded off by an evaluation of that organisation's experience of their foray into the world of computerisation.

'Successful Computing in a Small Business' is a concise summary of all the questions which you are likely to be faced with when you decide that it is time for your small business to start growing up. It is a positive, practical guide, which takes account of the problems involved and, more importantly, the solutions available.

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Fancy yourself as the Boris Becker of tomorrow? Or are you just one of those old-fashioned types intent on proving that chivalry isn't dead yet?

Sophie Lankenau looks at the two latest game releases from Logistick

Grand Slam
£14.95 (plus £1.50p&p)
Logi'stick UK Ltd
(0223) 423456 • All PCWs

Usually, the closest the average 'armchair' sportsman (or -woman) gets to becoming directly involved with his or her secret passion is being perched dangerously on the edge of the three piece suite from time to time.

Logistick, however, intend to change this state of affairs with the release of Grand Slam, the game which will enable you to, at long last, vanquish the Beckers and Lendlis of this world and "make you the undisputed champion of the tennis world." So, move away from the tramlines and into the action.

The game is available for all PCWs and is self booting. Simply make a copy of the master disc, insert it into the relevant drive of the machine (which is indicated on the label of the master disc), and wait for the program to load. At this point you could take the opportunity to brush up on your knowledge of tennis tactics; it takes a few minutes for the opening screen to appear.

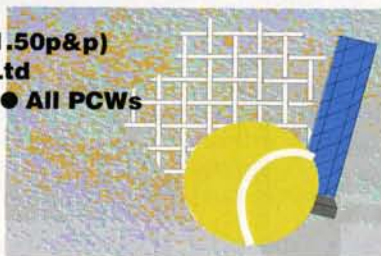
Your first task is to decide which tournament you wish to compete in. You have a choice of five, including the Italian Open, Flushing Meadows, and the Swiss Open. We decided to restrict our play to home ground and selected good old Wimbledon.

In practice, if you are no tennis expert, then there's nothing to choose between any of the venues; there is no indication in the documentation or on the screen itself as to which is the most demanding.

Match-making

Once you have made the selection, it is time to start the game proper. You are delivered to a court, where your opponent is to be found glaring intently at you from the other side of the net. Two ball-boys takes up their positions on either side of the umpire, and the score board runs along the bottom of the screen display.

First service is yours. At the bottom right of the screen is a 'power' measure,



which fluctuates as you prepare to 'serve'. When you judge the power to be just right, a press of the spacebar sends your service hurtling towards your opponent. There

is a certain amount of skill necessary at this opening stage; for example, if you let the ball go while the power level is full on, you will send it hurtling beyond the side boundaries. If you don't give it enough power, on the other hand, it will fall short of the net and you'll have to go for your second service.

Once your shot is delivered, you have the chance to alter various aspects of your style. The cursor arrow keys move you around the court, while the [+] and [-] keys (on either side of the spacebar) control the force of your shots. You can only adjust the power level once your service – or that of your opponent – has left the baseline.

hitting the ball in the first place. The screen indication of the racket angle is a diagonal line which is either in an 'acute' or 'grave' position.

Unfortunately, it is not very clear which is which – and, like the power settings, you cannot make any alterations until the game is in full swing

It should come as no surprise to learn that your first game of the Grand Slam tournament will not have you making your mark as the Fred Perry of the 1990's. However, you have four sets to play, and after a while, you begin to get the hang of the game. It is as much a game of tactics as the real thing, and does become somewhat compulsive after a while. The only way in which it differs is that you cannot argue with the decision of the umpires.

On the ball

One touch which the manufacturers have included in their attempt to make the game as life-like as possible is the activity of the ball boys. Every time a shot goes out, or hits the net, on comes a little figure who scoops up the ball and

Grand Slam

Pluses

- ▲ Quite realistic
- ▲ Highly challenging
- ▲ Good graphics

Minuses

- ▼ Poor racket control facility
- ▼ Ball boys slow and irritating

Range of features	4/5
Challenge	5/5
Interactiveness	3/5
Addictiveness	3/5

8000 Plus	
Value Verdict	15/20



You select which famous, international tennis star you want to become and in which tournament you wish to compete

So, not only do you have to move yourself pretty quickly to the position where you anticipate the return shot to land, but you also have to adjust the power at the same time. It is no good volleying a shot at full power from close to the net; equally, gently tapping a return from a baseline position will not be enough to get the ball over the net.

The [SHIFT] key dictates the angle of your shot, although controlling it can be something of a problem in mid-play. You can quite easily be transported from playing forehand to backhand without actually realising which way you are



Your bird's eye view of the game in full swing. Notice the power gauge on the right; this controls the force of your shot

scurries off to the sideline again. Nice idea – but after a while, the time it takes for the ball boy to do his job will begin to irritate you.

Grand Slam is an interesting challenge, demanding a high level of manual dexterity and tactical skill. It is probably as life-like a simulation of the game as you are likely to encounter on a PCW. However, the idea has been slightly let down by irritating touches such as limited racket power control, and the lethargic ball boy. But Grand Slam could well have you pounding the chalkdust for hours on end.

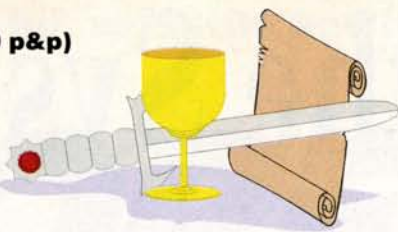
Sir Perceval

£14.95 (plus £1.50 p&p)

Logistick UK Ltd

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8000 series only



When days were old and knights were bold and PCWs weren't invented, a game of chance with a shield and a lance gave software houses incentive. No? Well, we couldn't resist giving it a try! And neither, it would appear, could Logistick – as their new release, Sir Perceval, clearly demonstrates. Chivalric adventuring has now been brought out of the jousting field and on to the PCW screen.

The game plan couldn't be simpler; you are Sir Perceval, King Arthur's most trusty knight, and it is your unenviable task to recover the Holy Grail from a dank, dark dungeon lurking somewhere in the middle of a rather inhospitable forest.

Unfortunately – as is always the case with such things – you are not alone in your quest; the dungeon is literally littered with ghoulish adversaries whose sole aim in life is to cut you to ribbons with their exceedingly powerful swords. Nasty stuff.

As we said earlier on, the whole concept behind Sir Perceval hinges on an uncomplicated idea and a relatively simple game plan. This simplicity, however, does nothing to deter from its overall appeal. In fact, it probably goes quite a long way towards enhancing it.

Room with a view?

The dungeon itself consists of a labyrinth of stone-walled rooms; some are completely empty, others have suits of armour on display, or pictures hanging on the walls. Each room has at least one doorway – some even have as many as two or three.

The point of all these very subtly-introduced differences is that the course through this rather uninviting dungeon to the treasure is, potentially, a very Hansel and Gretel affair; unless you make a mental note of these details as you progress, you could find yourself leading poor old Sir Perceval into very

dangerous territory indeed.

So, back to ghouls and swords. Every now and again during his travels, Sir Perceval is suddenly set upon by bands of ferocious hooded spectres (rather like accidents, these usually happen in threes).

The knight's defence is a mighty sword; the only problem is that with every blow he administers to his attackers, a little bit of his 'power' ebbs away (this is represented on a gauge to the bottom left of the screen). The loss of all his power means, basically, that it's curtains for Percy, and the whole adventure has to begin again from the start.

However, the good news is that there are plenty of opportunities to replenish his all important energy levels in the form of a collection of magic tokens which are scattered haphazardly along the route.

There are five of these in total and they include a key, a chalice, and a sack of some description. As soon as you spot one of these in a corner of the dungeon, you have to make sure that Sir Perceval picks it up and hides it away in a thoughtfully-provided strong-box (which, incidentally, will appear miraculously in a room somewhere almost as soon as you have collected a token).

As soon as he does so, his energy level is restored to full strength, and he is fully equipped to fend off his attackers again with an impressive display of parries and thrusts.

The graphics which Sir Perceval displays on your PCW screen are, again, simple but effective. A very helpful little touch which has been included is the facility to see the game from a different angle. The whole perspective changes at the touch of the [f1] key, and can often help clarify Sir Perceval's potentially dangerous position within the dungeon.

On the map

A second way to find out just where he is going is to press the [f5] key. The game is stopped temporarily, and a neat little map appears on your screen charting the knight's progress so far.

Unfortunately (but not really surprisingly, we might add), the position of the Holy Grail itself is never shown, so you are



A brief encounter with one of the ghoulish adversaries sent to obstruct Sir Perceval in his sacred mission to locate the Holy Grail



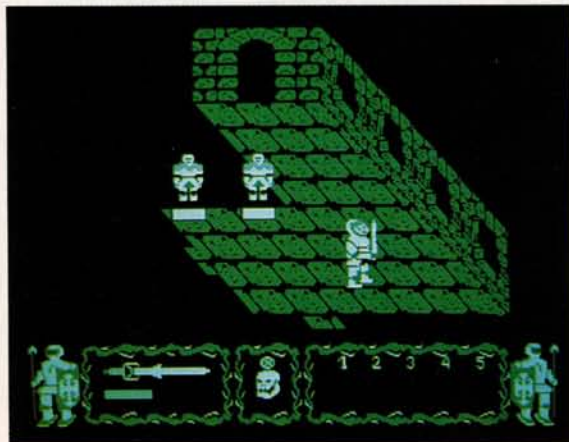
Fighting off an attacker diminishes, little by little, Sir Perceval's power reserves; these are indicated on the gauge, bottom left of the screen

not left with any clearer an idea of which direction in which to send Sir Perceval off scouting next. It's all rather frustrating. Nonetheless, if the map shows that Sir Perceval is simply going around in circles, then that, at least, of some use to know.

Sir Perceval seems to contain many of the best features of the text-only adventures typical of early PCW games – the mapping and clue elements are classic material for intrepid texters. However, because Sir Perceval has the added benefit of clear graphics, the overall package is an impressive one, which is sure to be appealing to anyone from the age of ten upwards.

The only reason for not recommending the game to the under 10s is that when Sir Perceval beats his attackers off with a sword, they go through a rather graphic process of demise. This involves loss of garments, followed by a somewhat brutal transformation to skeletal nakedness. Interesting stuff for the adults, but probably not guaranteed to put the minds of younger players at rest – especially just before bedtime.

Other than that, Sir Perceval will provide you with a pleasant few hours of adventuring, and a small degree of brain searching into the bargain. You can't go wrong.



Sir Perceval maps his way through the labyrinthine passages of the dungeon; the skull in the middle is one of the magic tokens

Sir Perceval

Pluses

- ▲ Simple yet interesting idea
- ▲ Good graphics
- ▲ Changing viewpoint of game a useful facility

Minuses

- ▼ 'Map' doesn't help your progress
- ▼ Power loss means that you have to start up again from scratch

Ease of use	4/5
Range of features	4/5
Challenge	3/5
Addictiveness	4/5

8000 Plus Value Verdict	15/20
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Unblocking the System

Nick Vandome contemplates that most common of authors' ailments – writer's block – and even goes as far as to suggest some possible cures

If any normal person phoned up a friend and said 'I've been blocked all morning' they would probably find themselves on the receiving end of some timely advice to go head for the medicine cabinet and the syrup of figs, or worse, to overdose on stewed prunes. However, normality is never high on the list of requirements for a successful writer and so when he or she becomes 'blocked' it tends to be more of a psychological nature rather than a physical one.

Writer's block is a bit like the Loch Ness Monster: no-one has ever seen it. But while some people remain firmly convinced of its existence, others regard the whole phenomenon as complete bunkum. Some writers claim that they have never suffered from writer's block and, while this may well be the case, I find myself treating them with the same dislike and distrust as those people who claim that they never suffered from acne when they were teenagers: if they have never had it how can they possibly know of the joys of overcoming it?

Breaking down the barriers

One of the great problems with writer's block is that it is considered a bit of a creative taboo – admitting to it is like admitting that you have bought satellite TV or that you like Pot Noodles. But now, in the interests of demystification, I am going to come out of the creative closet and happily confess that I am a sufferer of this mysterious ailment from time to time. For instance, during the course of writing this article I will probably walk around the room a few dozen times glowering at my innocent PCW, stand in front of the fire staring into space, clean the flat, and go to the pub. Because all of these things tend to successfully staunch the flow of words from mind to disc, they can all be interpreted as various forms of writer's block and be treated accordingly.

Initial outbreak

The first dose of writer's block that a writer will often encounter is the Oh-my-God, what-if-I'm-not-any-good syndrome. This happens before you have even put finger to word processor for the first time and is a very natural reaction. You not only worry about rejection but also about the fact that you may be wasting hours/weeks/years of your life for no recognisable benefit (ie, money) whatsoever.

As far as a cure for this type of writer's block is concerned, the answer is simple but painful – all you can do is take the plunge and hope that your masterpiece is well-received and not used as recycled loo paper. If it is any consolation (and I doubt it), this self-doubt will never completely leave your writing and, if it does, you will probably be making so much money at the time that you won't even notice it. This is where my room



Writer Nick Vandome at home with his PCW; 'Admitting to writer's block is like admitting that you've bought satellite TV or that you like Pot Noodles.'

pace comes in: I wander up and down my now threadbare carpet looking at what I have written, fretting over whether I have lost the knack altogether and fallen, instead, into that most dreaded of habits of writing fluent Double Dutch instead.

A close relative of this form of writer's block is that displayed by people who hear you are a writer and say, 'I've always wanted to write but...' They then give you a list of terminally prohibitive reasons why they cannot write; such as they have to go to work five days a week or there is always something good on telly, (this is of course a blatant lie, but we'll let it pass). This is really a case of pre-writer's block and is, to be more exact, a mixture of fear and laziness. The only way around it is to drag yourself away from Eastenders, make a large pot of coffee, glue yourself to your PCW and see what you can do.

The cupboard is bare

One of the most debilitating manifestations of writer's block is the one that leaves me standing in front of my fire and staring into space. This not only means that there are icicles forming around my desk, but also that what every writer dreads has happened – my mind has gone blank and the ideas have dried up.

Sometimes people see me like this and they think 'Ah, he's being creative' but, in reality, it just means that I do not have a clue what to write next. However, I try to keep up the pretence by looking tortured and grunting creatively a few times.

The best cure for this is to take yourself and your mind away from your writing environment for a while and indulge yourself in some faintly pleasurable pastime which has the attraction of being totally unconnected with the creative process: go to the cinema, go and see a friend, take the goldfish for a walk, go and rob your local post office – anything. I usually find this does the trick because I either return refreshed, or else something happens while I am away from my PCW that gives me an idea and provides the missing link for whatever I was writing.

The rarest form of writer's block is the one that has me reaching for my protective industrial clothing in a vain attempt to tidy the debris in my flat. This occurs whenever I have a blinding flash of inspiration: I am so reluctant to write down the vivid idea in my head, in case it becomes jumbled, that I have to do something energetic to galvanize myself into committing it to disc. Needless to say, this is a very rare occurrence, as can be witnessed by the fact that I have a very messy flat.

I mentioned that I sometimes go to the pub as a result of writer's block. This is actually a lie and has nothing to do with writing – I just like going to the pub.

Causes and cures

If I were to list all the other excuses I find for not writing, or not being able to write, a few acres of Amazonian rainforest would probably have to be felled to provide a suitable amount of paper. Since all writers are such delicate, unique individuals, they will all have their very own causes of writer's block and it suffices to say there are probably as many of these as there are fibs in the Sunday Sport.

Equally, there are as many different suggested cures for the condition, and if I ever manage to find that definitive remedy, I will give up writing immediately, sell it to every author in the country and retire to an island in the sun.

Until I do, however, the best advice I can offer is that rather old-fashioned, unpleasant concept of will-power.

There are several quack cures on the market at the moment, including one from a writer who claims that the best way to overcome writer's block is to just sit down and write anything, even if it is names out of the telephone directory. This is obviously the advice of a madman and if you find yourself doing this, then please let me know and I will put you in touch with a very good psychiatrist.

The strangest solution to the problem of writer's block for PCW users that I have heard is a quaint notion of leaving your keyboard and writing with a pen and paper for a while. It sounds like a great idea but for the life of me I can't remember what a pen looks like. ●

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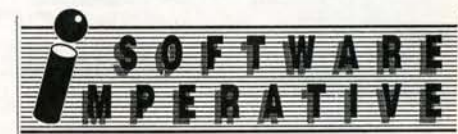
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Cramped Quarters

Adapting your company logo to fit small labels and tickets can be quite tricky; Alec Rae together with MicroDesign discover the knack

After learning how to print out a letter, the next major advance for the PCW owner is often learning how to print a label. It is quite often followed by a rash of labels appearing everywhere in the house. Three inch discs, video tapes, boxes, cardboard files, drawers, the dog – everything suddenly acquires a neatly printed, white square.

The sticky-back label is hardly high-technology. And yet there are few more useful aids to the small business. A well-designed label can be stuck on everything you produce from the mail shot envelope to your finished products.

Naturally if you are in charge of a large company and/or are rich beyond the dreams of Creosote you will get labels professionally printed. If you are like the other 99.99 per cent of 8000 Plus readers you will load up your version of MicroDesign2 and knock out a few designs yourself. It's so much more satisfying, isn't it?

Having spent the last couple of months of this series designing logos for headed paper and invoice forms, it would only seem natural to want to use it again for your labels.

But unless you have designed the ideal logo, you could find yourself in trouble. The main problem is that as soon as you start working with labels, you immediately find yourself restricted for space.

You must have certain elements on any label you produce – an address, a description of your product, instructions or the price. All of these elements are really more important than your company logo. But often if you reduce the size of the logo so that it fits in the corner left, it becomes so small that it ends up looking like an ink blot.

Think big

There is, of course, an easy answer. Buy the biggest labels you can get. Those big ones, about four or six inches square that always seem to get stuck on padded envelopes, are ideal.

But you can brighten up smaller labels and make the best use of the bigger ones by taking a slightly different attitude to your design.

One good idea is to use your graphics around the edge of your label – like a border – so as to focus attention on the important element of the design.

If you happen to have designed a long flat logo, you're in luck. If not, you may have to adapt your design to suit the format. You might take the elements

of your design and reposition them alongside each other.

You might prefer to abandon the logo and play about with ways of using your company name. Because MicroDesign 2 can handle text as if it was graphics, you can do a number of interesting things using only your company name. For instance, you could rotate the words around 360 degrees to run the name continuously around the outside.

If this all seems to be too complicated there are clip art 'borders' available on the MicroDesign disc that could be used to create a bit of interest. Depending on the type of business you have, you may be able to adapt the images to suit.

For instance, a flower shop could use the 'Ashley' flower border, a whole-food could use the 'Cornucopia' cut and any craft business could probably use one of the 'Endknot' designs.

Why a label?

But where do you use these wonderful labels? People running small craft businesses will not have to think long. A label can be stuck on to your product, on the front of the box the product comes in, on displays of your products and on anything else that is seen by the public that doesn't actually move a lot (Yes, that includes the dog).

When your products arrive at your customers' premises, wouldn't it be a good idea to have the instant recognition of several impressive-looking labels stuck all over the parcel.

And what of the lowly envelope? In most companies the mail is opened and the envelope is thrown in the bin, without the person it was intended for seeing it. And yet virtually every large company has its name and logo plastered all over every envelope.

When you come down to the smaller business, especially a business dealing with the public, the chances of your customer seeing (and being subliminally affected by) your envelope increase dramatically.

Of course, if you only use 20 envelopes a week, it would be extortionately expensive to have them specially printed. But by using your PCW and some labels you can easily customise your envelopes just as effectively as the big boys.

You might think it too much of a nuisance to have to set up MicroDesign every time you want to print a label. And you might also think that you couldn't cram very much on to a small address label.

Well the answer is simple. Just produce a series of four-inch square labels (perhaps using a coloured ribbon to add interest) with a blank space in the middle. Then when you have a letter or parcel to send, print the address out on a small label using LocoScript or your favourite word processor, and then stick it in the middle of the bigger label.

Having worked with this format for a while, you will also see potential for other pieces of literature of that size. Sales fliers, instructions, change of addresses and a thousand other documents might work better four inches square, rather than on an A4 sheet. For a start they save a lot of paper, they don't get folded (so your name is always visible) and, by concentrating your mind, you are actually more likely to only write what needs to be written instead of being tempted to fill up the space with meaningless drivel.

Once you have developed your border you might also find this a useful set-up for sales literature and price lists, getting away from the formal 'letter' format.

What's in a name?

Have you ever stood in one of the high-powered fast food places and counted how many times you see the word McDonalds or Wimpy or Bert's Fish and Chip shop?

Now most customers should be able to guess the name of the place by reading the sign above the door. So why do so many highly paid marketing people spend so much time, effort and money in getting the company name plastered over every napkin and paper cup? Well

the simple answer is 'because it works'.

If you read the word McDonalds 300 times in one visit to the place, you are more likely to remember it than if you only see it once above the door.

Obviously this kind of over-kill marketing won't work for every kind of business. But it does open your eyes to the fact that many small businesses miss literally thousands of opportunities to present their name and company logo to the public.



1 A question of size

1 As soon as you start to tackle the design of a label, you immediately face the problem of getting things to fit exactly. Label sizes vary drastically and the spaces between labels seem to be just as erratic. One problem with MicroDesign is that you don't have, on screen, any way of measuring the final size of your image on paper. This exercise is interesting, if for no other reason than the final printed image is about 10 centimetres (four inches) deep and about 11 centimetres (4 1/2 inches) wide.

This is small enough to go on the front of a foolscap envelope and yet big enough to take the smallest address labels. Standard address labels would have to be trimmed to fit.

Of course, every label you buy always seems to be a different size from the ones you had before. Have a lot of cheap paper available, to test your designs out before you waste a whole roll of labels.

2 Give yourself space

2 Having decided on a border you have to plough through the clip art examples available on disc. The one chosen here is CORNKNOT.CUT on the Cuts disc, provided with MicroDesign.

Go to the Design screen (from the Layout screen you press [EXIT] and [D] for Design). Move the working screen to the top left corner. This gives you a more accurate idea of where the image will be printed out – vitally important when trying to load up labels. Press the down arrow on the side panel and click on the scrolling arrows to move it.

The cut we want to use is actually too big to go on to the normal screen, so you first have to clear a bit of space. Find the arrow at the bottom of the control panel (right of the screen), which points diagonally down at the Icon area at the bottom of the screen and the icons disappear (never did like them anyway) leaving plenty of room.

3 Perfect positioning

3 Press [F1] or click on Loadcut and choose the correct drive for the disc with your Cut files by pressing [ALT] and [V] until you get to the one you want.

For most people, this will probably be A: drive so when the display says A:*.CUT you press [ENTER].

Use the mouse to click on CORNKNOT.CUT and, then, on the tick symbol on the control panel. When the positioning box appears again, put it in the top left corner (click exactly on the spot you think where the middle of the box should go) although avoid pushing it up too close to the edge. Try and give yourself a little room to work.

Make sure that the cut is going to appear the same size. This is shown by the fact that the x1 symbol in the bottom right corner of the screen has a box round it. On pressing the [ENTER] key, the Cornknot pattern appears, a complex interconnecting pattern.



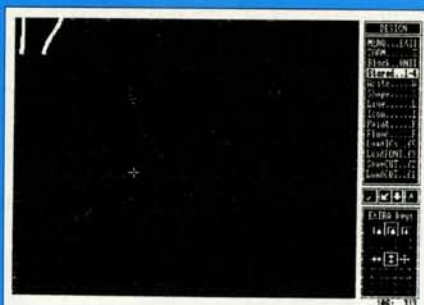
4 The first corner

4 This is, of course, just the first corner of the four which make up the whole border. You have to produce four of these, each facing a different direction. First store the image into the program's memory. Press [UNIT] or click on the word BLOCK on the menu.

The usual box appears on screen, which you can easily adjust to hold the whole of the image. By clicking the right hand button of the mouse, the cursor moves to the top right corner and then the bottom left corner of the the box, allowing you to adjust the size by 'dragging' the cursor using the left hand button.

As you have just loaded the cut, the box should be exactly the size to fit the new image.

Note where the ends of the design come at the edge of the box as this could help with lining up. Press the number [1] and the image is stored.

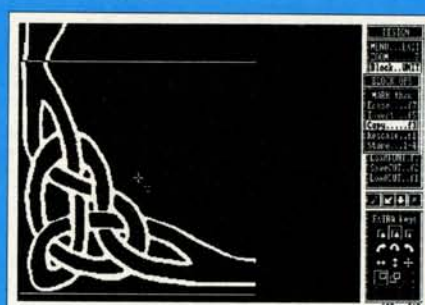


5 Going down ...

5 As the completed design will be bigger than can be seen on screen at one time, you now have to move the working screen. Click on the downward pointing arrow just next to the arrow that switched off the Icon area.

By clicking on the bottom cursor arrow, move the working area down until only the bottom of the lines of the design are showing. Click on the downward pointing arrow again to get the Extra keys section back again.

Click on 'Stored 1-4' in the Menu and a box appears, just the right size to hold your stored image. At the same time some symbols appear in the Extra keys box. By clicking on the correct symbol you can rotate the image. This time choose the symbol with the arrows pointing up and down. Line up the box as best you can and click on the tick. The reversed Cornknot will appear.

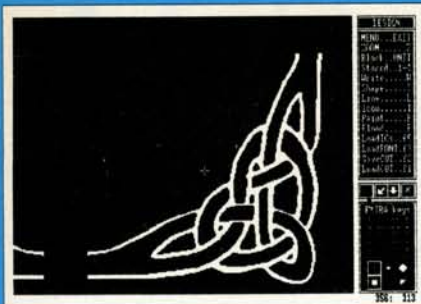


6 The second corner

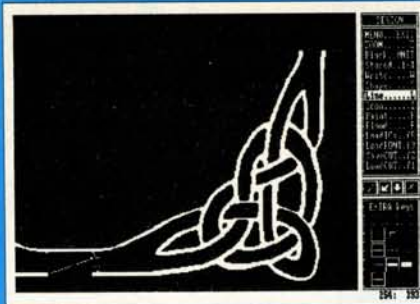
6 If the new image is not lined up exactly, don't worry. Press [UNIT] or click on Block and the box appears again surrounding the cut. Check the top line of the Extra Box to make sure that the middle symbol is highlighted. This allows images to overlap without obliterating what's underneath.

Click on Copy in the small menu and you can reposition the new image to line up exactly with the first one. This is best achieved by holding down the left hand button and 'dragging' the new positioning box to the right position. Make sure you turn off the box round the rotating icon (click with the mouse) or it will rotate again. Once in the right place, click twice and the cut moves.

This can be tried as often as you want. If you are not happy with the positioning, just click on the cross icon and start again.



7 Move to the side



8 Bridging the gap



9 Choosing your font

7 Move the working screen – sideways this time – using the scrolling arrows and repeat the process of loading the image with the Stored 1-4 command.

This time, as well as wanting the image turned upside down, you want it reversed. So click on the symbol with the four little arrows pointing in all directions in the Extra keys box. This just means the program will turn the whole thing inside out.

This time when you are lining up you may not want to put the two images right up to each other. If you want to put a fair amount of text in the box, or if you want to insert an address label, you will probably want an extra half an inch in the width.

Line the positioning box up as well as you can, leaving a gap and click twice. Fill in the last corner choosing the arrows pointing sideways to simply invert the image.

8 You bridge the gap using the Line command. Click on Line in the menu and move the cursor to the end of a line on the first cut. Click once.

A line will appear from wherever the crosshair cursor was on the screen to the current position of the cursor. Click the left hand button of the mouse and the cursor will switch to the other end of the line. Hold down the left hand button and drag the cursor to the corresponding line on the second cut.

A line will appear between the two spots. In the Extra keys box you will see symbols representing different thicknesses of line. Click on the middle one. The line will become the right thickness.

Adjust the positioning by dragging the end up and down (and flicking to the other end using the right hand button, if necessary) until you are happy with it. Click on the tick to make it permanent.

9 If the border has an 'arty' feel, you will want to use one of the more exotic type faces for the text. The one used here for the main copy is the Celtic face found on the extra fonts disc no. 1.

However, for the address it is probably still sensible to choose a more readable typeface – on this occasion CIR-CUL17.MDF on the fonts disc that comes with MicroDesign 2.

Load the font in the usual way – [f3] LoadFont; don't forget to pick the right drive with [ALT] and [V] and double click on CELTIC29.MDF. Then pick the Write option on the menu and simply start to input all the text that is required.

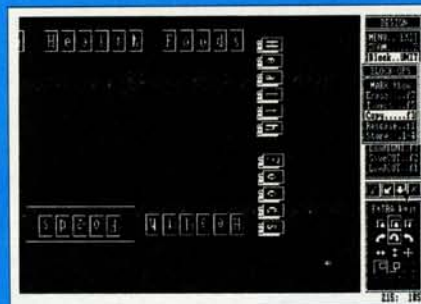
Remember that you can alter the height, width and spacing of your letters – [f7] for scaling and [f5] for Spacing, and click on the arrows to increase or decrease – so by trial and error you can make it fit just right.



10 The whole picture



11 Something quite different



12 Rotating the text

10 One fairly major problem which you habitually face when you're not in a position to see on the screen the full area you are working on is that you can't really know if you have lined up and centred correctly the text which you've entered.

Perhaps the easiest way of overcoming this is to adjust the positioning of the text in the layout screen – [EXIT] then the [L] key for layout.

The words will naturally be far too small for you to read them but you should be able to distinguish each line. Using the Block option, simply create a box around each line and then 'Copy' it to the right place in exactly the same way as you did with the Cornknot.

At this point you may want to save several versions – one with text, one ready to take a label and so on. This is simply achieved with [f2] SaveArea, picking the right drive and choosing a suitable file name.

11 The same techniques tackled in the previous example can be put to just as effective a use when tackling simpler designs like the one shown above.

This has the benefit of being a little bit smaller and subscribes much more heavily than the previous example to the Macdonalds philosophy mentioned on the first page: the company name is given repeated airing.

The effect is achieved because of the fact that, once text is on screen, MicroDesign 2 regards it just as if it was a piece of graphics.

The clip art used is WHEAT.CUT, found on the MicroDesign clip art file, this time loaded at half size (click on the x1/2 symbol when loading).

This time the font chosen was SHADOW12.MDF found on the Extra Fonts Disc No 2. Again you can adjust the height and width of the letters to make sure that the text fits the space you have available.

12 Type out the company name at the required size and then store each word using Block, Store 1-4 and a different number. The images are too complicated to be stored as one block so you break the name up and re-assemble the words on screen. This time we cannot simply rotate the block as with the Cornknot.

This is because using the commands available in the Stored 1-4 command you actually reverse the image. So unless you expect the customer to hold the label up to a mirror to read your company name it is easier to produce the text the normal way up (using Stored 1-4) and then rotate it using the Copy facility.

When you use the Block mode and choose Copy you will see a row of icons in the Extra key box with arrows twisting in various directions. This is self-explanatory. You create the box round the image and then rotate it in the direction you want.

Follow that Cab!

Cavalier Software have made a name for themselves as the creators of reliable specialist business software; Alec Rae takes to the road with their latest release

Taxicab
£134.99
Cavalier Software
071 6396683

A constant problem facing programmers of specialist business software is that, to do the job properly, they would really need to write a new program for every firm that wants to use their software. Cavalier Software, on the other hand, argue that the only way is to write a program to suit a specific business activity.

In this case they have tackled the twilight world of taxi-cab businesses. To be more specific they have tackled the kind of taxi-cab business that organises a number of self-employed drivers, and provides a parcel or passenger delivery service.

The idea is to take a relatively small sector and produce a comprehensive service for it. Taxicab provides a full double-entry book-keeping system, covering sales, purchase and nominal ledgers which have been set up specifically to suit this kind of business. It can give you a wealth of information on the financial status of the company including bank reconciliation and unpleasant details like VAT returns.

But it does much more. There is a database of all customers, suppliers and drivers that can be called up from other

parts of the suite of programs. This means that you can instantly produce all the details for invoices and statements, as well as being able to produce labels for mailshots and other lists with ease.

In another section you can build up a list of journeys (with the mileages) and the charges that would apply. Here you can specify a location with a map reference or a five letter short form of a place name (Llan for Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogoch for instance). The starting point and the destination are entered as well as the mileage. You are also asked to enter the various rates that your drivers charge (day rate, night rate, American tourist rate and so on) and the minimum charge. Then when a customer phones up for a quote you simply call up the module, enter the relevant place names and the rate and you have the price for the journey.

Tickets, please

You can post 'tickets', which are records of journeys undertaken by drivers for trade customers who get invoiced regularly rather than pay cash. This records how much the customer owes and how much the operating firm owes the driver. At the right time, the system generates invoices for these regulars or one-off invoices.

And, most importantly, there's a module to handle radio charges, the fee that the company charges each driver for providing its organisational services.

So is this kind of comprehensive service a good idea? Certainly for a company that has not been computerised before the idea of an all-in-one package must seem attractive.

Unless you are already committed to a particular computerised accounts system, you might as well make the effort to get to know this one and take advantage of all the other elements in the package.

The shoe box method

Here is one problem. Everyone knows there are three methods of handling accounts – the double entry system, the single entry system and the shoe box full of receipts and a notebook labelled 'Petty Cash' with "borrowed £50" scrawled in crayon on the front page.

Everyone also knows that if you have a PCW, you shouldn't really use the third method. However, there are many small companies that don't want to go the full hog and switch to a double entry system.

Cavalier have probably made double entry book-keeping as easy as any comparable accounts package. As the program is specifically for a taxi business, there is a suggested list of nominal accounts that are suitable for the business, although it is easy to change these to suit your own set-up. A conversation with your accountant, at this stage, is invaluable and often clarifies the situation a lot more effectively than re-reading the manual 23 times.

If you do keep a proper book-keeping system, it will mean that your accountant's life is made considerably easier and he won't be able to justify the extortionate fees he can get away with when he has to sort out the shoe-box method of accountancy.

We are organised really

Because of the customer that Taxicab is aimed at (the kind of business that is acting as a central organising agency), presumably they will have to be quite organised already. Some might even be manually operating a double entry system (poor souls), in which case Taxicab will revolutionise their lives.

For the others, they have to make a decision as to how determined they are to make the thing work. When they con-

Going Up

A program, like Taxicab, written for a specific, limited market sector is called vertical software. This is, of course, because you put the discs in the disc drive vertically instead of horizontally. Or something like that anyway.



Whether Fleet Street in London or Hetty Peglars Tump in deepest Gloucestershire, Taxicab can help (Photograph supplied courtesy of The Telegraph Colour Library)

sider the advantages in terms of ease of invoicing and the ability to keep track of the financial situation and the bank balance, they may well consider it worth a few headaches getting the program set up.

The advantages

In fact, by committing yourself to one suite of programs you are looking for several advantages. For a start it should save you time by having the various modules inter-connected.

This is certainly true of Taxicab. A good example is the module where you can post drivers' tickets – taking note of journeys made on behalf of trade customers who are invoiced on a weekly or monthly basis.

Without the computer, this is a time-consuming and thankless task, needing hours on a calculator, constantly double-checking. It is difficult to know which is more dangerous; overcharging a good customer or underpaying a driver.

However, with Taxicab it is relatively easy. As you will probably be posting a number of tickets for the same day, you are asked for a default date. Then every time you are asked for the date, you simply press [RETURN] and the date appears.

You are also asked what rate you pay the driver for this service. It is worked out on a percentage, with the amount due to the driver being worked out automatically.

When you set up the system you have to enter all the drivers and trade customers in the Customer/Supplier database module. Here, names, addresses, telephone numbers and lists of contracts are held for easy access.

Short name, please?

Each customer and driver has a number and the program will print out a list. There is also a Short Name facility – an easy to remember name that can be used to call up any entry. If there is more than one entry with the same short name (several Smiths, for instance) the program will show you all the ones available to allow you to choose the correct one.

This list is particularly useful in the drivers' tickets module. By entering the correct code number for the database entry the correct driver is chosen and his name and address are displayed on

screen for confirmation.

You can then choose what Nominal Account you want the amounts posted to. As this will normally be Trade Purchases, you simply press [RETURN] again and the default account number appears. If your current system requires you to post this to another account it is easy to change the default account number. Press [RETURN] again for the default date and you can begin.

The customer number will reveal the name and address and there is space for a reference number and details of the journey – who or what was carried, the starting point, the destination and the mileage.

If you are working out the price on a mileage rate you can have it worked out by the program. You can call up one of the rates stored in the Journey Database to help you work out the price or you can make one up off the top of your head. The program works out how much the driver is due – a figure you can adjust.

From this simple exercise, all sorts of wonderful things happen. For a start the program keeps track of what the customer owes. At the suitable time, it is a simple matter to go into the invoice module and print out all the necessary invoices, complete with your name and address. The amount that you have to pay to the drivers is also automatically posted to the purchase ledger and a statement can be easily produced when the terrible moment comes when you have to pay up.

Let's interplay

This interplay between the various elements of the program can be seen time and again (the Radio Charges are automatically posted to the Purchase Ledger at the right time) and is one of the strongest features of the package.

Even moving from section to section is not too time consuming. Taxicab is written in BASIC but is surprisingly fast. It is totally menu-driven, which makes it quite easy to learn but there is a shortage of on screen prompts that can cause confusion until you get used to the conventions. Taxicab's manual is well-written and as clear and does try to be bright and chatty. That said, the accountancy part is still written in accountantese and there are no easy-to-follow tutorials or examples. It is perhaps unfair to expect a computer pro-

Occupational hazard

Perhaps one problem in using Taxicab may be that it will probably fully occupy your PCW for most of the day. The suite takes up a lot of space in the machine. Loading the program transfers all the necessary program files on to the M drive so that you can quickly and easily call up any module you want.

This takes up 250K of space on the M drive – at least one reason why 8256 owners cannot not run Taxicab. The pro-

gram also makes use of the 720k discs available on both the 8512 and the 9512 to cut disc changing to a minimum.

However, even with the larger memory drive, Taxicab leaves little room on your machine for anything else. Certainly, as you would expect, it takes a fair amount of time to move all these program files over to M. You wouldn't want to be switching it off 10 minutes

```

JOURNEY DATABASE
A. Update Rates Table
B. Create Journey Record
C. Delete Journey Record
D. Display Journey Record
E. Print/Display Journey Records

X. EXIT

PLEASE MAKE YOUR SELECTION D
JOURNEY START (CAST ) THE CASTLE
JOURNEY END (Wood ) House in Woods
MILEAGE 23.0
Rate or Value 0.50 TOTAL 11.50

- Press RETURN to return to menu
  
```

A journey record on display, showing fare, mileage and destination

```

POST DRIVER TICKETS      DEFAULT DATE 12/02/91
DRIVER A/C   REF NO.   N/CODE   DATE
[ 21 ]      [000002]   [5501]   [12/02/91]

CUST  REF  DESCRIPTION  FROM  TO  MILES  RATE  VALUE
3 000001 Dwarf         Woods  Pub  12.0  2.00  24.00
4 000002 Poison apple  Castle Woods  6.5  2.00  13.00

TOTAL 37.00
Driver Credit @ 24 % [ 3.12] Please Confirm (y/n)
  
```

Here the information for driver 'tickets' is prepared

```

NOMINAL LEDGER ACCOUNTS      BALANCE SHEET

Bank Account                  1201
Cash on Deposit               1290
Computer Equipment            0120
Computer Equipment Dep.      0220
Drawings                      2550
Motor Vehicle                 0150
Motor Vehicle Dep.           0250
Petty Cash                    1250
Purchases VAT                 2050
Reserves (Profit/Loss)       2550
Sales VAT                     1050
Share Capital                 2510
Stock Balance                 1101
Sundry Creditors              2010
Sundry Debtors                1010
Trade Creditors               2001
Trade Debtors                 1001
V.A.T. Control Account       2090

THERE ARE MORE - SHALL I DISPLAY THEM (y/n)
  
```

Choose a nominal account for the amounts to be posted to

gram manual to explain book-keeping but if you don't have some experience in this field you should look for advice beyond the manual. Some of the documentation was written for Cavalier's regular accounts package and has not been amended. It is also lacking an index, which is sadly missed for a program of this size and complexity. Taxicab is ideal for the task it sets itself, assuming that the user has a reasonable understanding of book-keeping. ●

TaxiCab

Pluses

- ▲ Integrated package
- ▲ Covers virtually all the needs of the customers it is aimed at
- ▲ Fast and powerful

Minuses

- ▼ Virtually ties up a whole PCW
- ▼ Needs some accountancy experience

Range of features 5/5
Documentation 3/5
Ease of use 3/5
Performance 5/5

8000 Plus
Value Verdict 16/20

The Facts of Life

What's it all about? Why are we here? And can your PCW find the answer to these questions? Dave Green shows you how to play The Game of Life

It appears to be common knowledge, at least among 8000 Plus readers, that the classic computer game 'Life' is hidden on the LocoScript 1 disc. However, this addition, so thoughtfully provided with the purchase of your PCW, may appear to many people a rather overrated pastime.

All that seems to happen is that a few O's move around the screen for a while, then rapidly disappear off to wherever it is deleted characters go. Most sane people usually give up at this point and, as a result, never get to see just how clever and complex a simple game like Life can become. This month we're going to give you an

insight into Life's basic principles and show you just a few of the fun patterns you can create.

The miracle of birth...

To start 'Life' run up CP/M and, if you have an 8256 or 8512, insert your LocoScript 1 disc. Type **MAIL232** [RETURN] in response to the usual **A>** prompt and, once the program has loaded, the screen will go blank apart from a small menu bar at the top.

Then press [F3] to select the **Files** pull-down menu, and use the arrow keys to move the cursor down to the final option, **Transfer as ASCII**. Now just press the [EXTRA] and **P** keys together

and the screen will clear completely, apart from the cursor which you can move around using the arrow keys. This is the Life playing area.

'Cells' are created at the cursor position by pressing [RETURN] unless there is already a cell at that position - in which case [RETURN] removes it. When you've set up a pattern of cells, press [SPACE] and the computer will apply the simple rules (more on this later) that determine which cells die and which reproduce.

Once they've all died out or you've grown bored of that particular pattern, press [SPACE] again (or [EXIT]) and it'll take you back to the MAIL232

New dimension

The '2333' notation was devised by Carter Bays at the University of South Carolina, and the digits describe the following; the smallest number of neighbours a cell can have to survive; the largest number of neighbours a cell can have to survive; the smallest number of neighbours an empty space must have for a new cell to be created; and the largest number required for a cell to be created. Phew! 3-D versions of Life 4555 and Life 5766 do exist, but, as far as we know, have never been given away free with the Amstrad PCW.

Close encounters

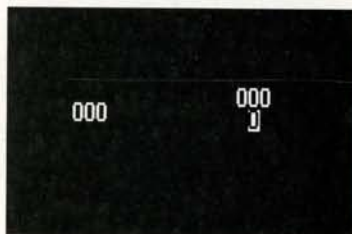
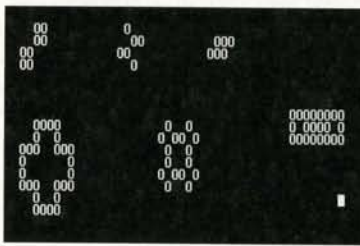
So, enough of the theory. It's time to actually see some of these interesting patterns. Colonies of only one or two cells are invariably short-lived, but try the following configurations of three and four, shown in the first screenshot.

There's plenty of room on the screen to run both patterns at the same time, but keep them apart so they don't interfere with each other.

As soon as you press [SPACE], the line of three should begin to oscillate with its alternative vertical form - this is the simplest cyclic Life pattern and is universally known as a 'blinker'. The T-shape of 4 cells meanwhile goes through an explosive growth phase of star-like patterns, only to settle into a formation of 4 synchronised blinkers.

It's quite common for Life forms, or at least parts of them, to settle into this distinctive 'blinker' pattern, although there are a large number of other potential oscillators.

Our second and third screenshots show some rather more complicated "blinker" patterns for you to try out.



Try these two simple cyclic life forms

The two screenshots above show life in some of its prettiest cyclic formations

Life's what you make it

One of the most interesting things about Life is it's actually extremely difficult to predict how an arrangement of cells will develop - there are no hard and fast rules, for instance, that state that a straight line of 4 or more cells will always form a stable colony, as experiments with rows of 5, 6, 7 or more cells will easily demonstrate.

One feature which Life has in common with other complex systems is that known as 'sensitive dependency on initial conditions', which basically means that small changes in the starting pattern can have big results later on. This can easily be demonstrated.

Try the pattern in the screen shot,

on the left-hand side. This is the same as our earlier example, except that an O has been added and the result rotated through 90 degrees.

This new configuration is called the



R-pentomino and it spreads like wildfire. The more patient Life-watchers out there should be warned that under ideal circumstances it only reaches a stable state after 1103 generations.



The simple life-form on the left can spread, in mere minutes, into the formation on the right

menus so you can start all over again with a different screen.

The proud parent

You've probably realised by now, with all this talk of 'cells' and 'patterns', that Life is not a computer game in the conventional sense.

Invented in the late 1960's, by the Cambridge mathematician John H. Conway, it is basically a simulation of the way in which colonies of living cells

develop, and is based on very simple set of interactive rules.

In the most common computer version (known as Life 2333) cells die if they have fewer than 2, or more than 3, immediate neighbours. However, new cells are also created in empty spaces that are surrounded by exactly 3 living cells, so the population as a whole has the potential for increasing, decreasing or staying more or less the same, depending on cellular arrangement.

That's about all you need to know – what's so remarkable about Life is the surprisingly complex behaviour that results from the application of these simple rules alone.

Of course, you don't really need a computer to play it. Legend has it that Conway first tried out the idea by moving plates around on the tiled floor of his kitchen – fortunately, your PCW version is faster, easier to play and you can leave it running over mealtimes ●

Travelling Life

If you do let the R-pentomino run through a number of generations, one thing you might notice is a number of spontaneously-created shapes that appear to crawl across the screen, before crashing into other cells and disappearing. These are perhaps the most exciting of all simple Life forms because their repeating pattern shifts the whole shape one space diagonally every four generations

Conway called them 'gliders' because of the apparent gliding motion that results. The top screenshot shows the basic form for you to try yourself.

Gliders give you the power of being able to introduce new cells into previously stable patterns – just try crashing a few into some of the oscillators we saw previously, or setting up gliders so that they collide with each other.

However, the fun does not end there. Having discovered the glider, Conway issued a challenge to the mathematical community to come up with a Life pattern that produced new cells indefinitely, either in the form of clumps of cells left behind a moving glider-type



This little mover is known as a glider



The everlasting Gosper glider gun

configuration, or a pattern which itself produced more and more gliders.

The challenge was met, and the \$50 prize collected, in 1970 by a computer scientist at MIT called Bill Gosper,

who devised a glider-producing pattern, shown in the next screenshot, known as the Gosper glider gun.

While this is certainly the most complicated Life form you've typed in so far, it is well worth the effort to see the steady stream of gliders, slowly emerging off towards the bottom left-hand corner of the screen. It is also quite an intriguing problem to figure out exactly how the glider gun works.

Essentially it consists of two identical 'shuttle'-like structures. These move backwards and forwards slightly out of phase with each other. The blocks at either end 'eat up' all the debris produced when they turn around on their outward runs, and gliders are formed from the debris when they meet again in the middle.

By way of proof, it is possible to isolate just one shuttle between two of these blocks, but you must discover for yourself exactly where the second block should go.

This should certainly give you some idea of how complicated Life problems can be approached and solved.

Everlasting Life

the more stable Life configurations you to try out.

The first thing you need to bear in mind when designing stable Life forms is that every cell needs to have either 2 or 3 immediate neighbours in order to survive. Remember not to give any empty spaces exactly 3 neighbours, otherwise new cells will be created that will probably disrupt the existing pattern.

A useful building block for constructing large stable Life forms consists of two pairs of cells, meeting at a right angles and filled by an empty space. The configurations shown in the top screenshot are based on this principle.

Of course, the last pattern shown would only be truly stable if the chain continued off to infinity in both directions. Ours has a distinct tendency to unravel itself as the individual cells on the ends die of loneliness.

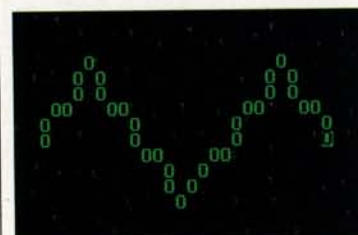
The larger stable Life forms are particularly good for demonstrating the sort of sensitivity mentioned earlier – just one cell out of place can quickly lead to chain reactions, that soon destroy the entire structure. Or, if you're in the mood for something rather more dramatic, crashing gliders into them

doesn't usually do them a great deal of good either.

To end on a theoretical note, it has been proved that it is possible to carry out simple computations within the Life system, by using certain notations. For example, the number 1 can represent a glide and the number 0 representing the absence of a glider. The subtraction "1-1+0" could then be carried out within a hypothetical 'Life computer' by the two gliders crashing into each other leaving the complete absence of gliders, which represents the answer - zero. There is mathematical proof to suggest that a system capable of carrying out simple computations such as these can, in theory, carry out any computable function.

Of course, it is a practical impossibility to construct a Life pattern to carry out the same computations as, say, a PCW running LocoScript. However, Life is just one of a whole class of different systems, known as 'cellular automata', that share this property of applying local interactive rules between interconnected sub units.

All pretty mind-boggling stuff, we must admit. But then that, as they say, is what Life is all about.



The two screenshots above are both good contenders for everlasting life

So far we have dealt mainly with changing patterns because they tend to be the most exciting to look at.

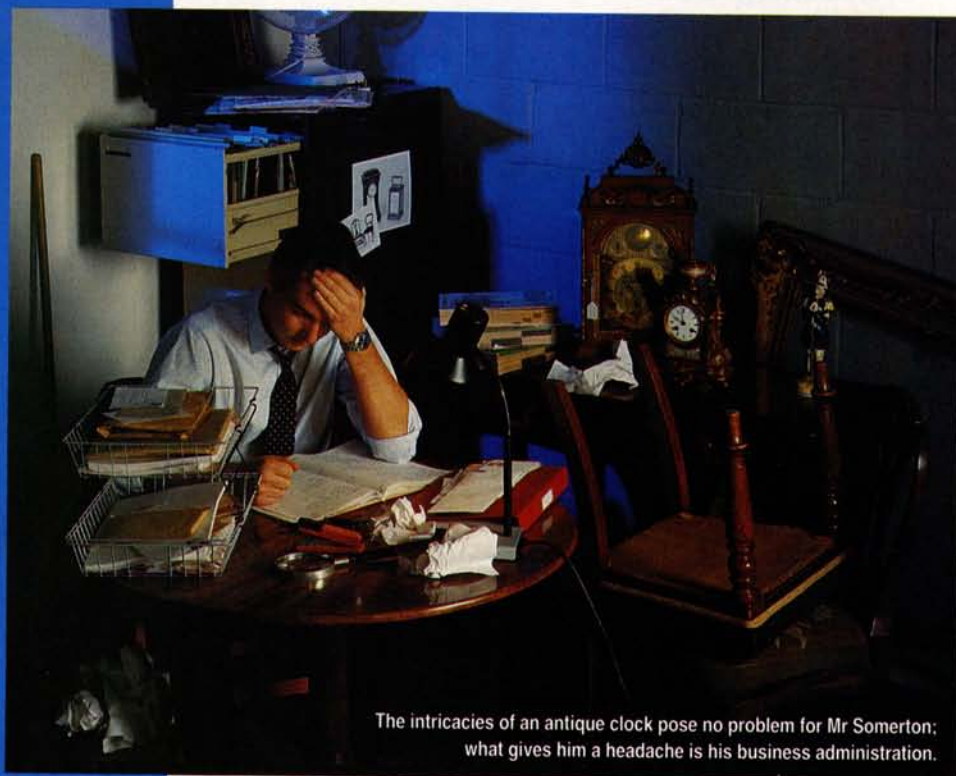
It can, however, be just as interesting to look at Life forms which manage to stay the same, despite the continued efforts of the growth and death rules. Our screenshots above show some of

The book of life

For those with a more academic interest, "Cellular Automata Machines" by Tomaso Toffoli and Norman Margolus (MIT Press 1988) is the definitive text on Life. Also, Piers Anthony's science fiction novel 'OX' (first published by Corgi in 1977) has a lot of Life-related discussions and an energy-monster which propels itself along by sending out gliders. No, really.

Tools of the Trade

Computerising – from scratch – your up and coming business venture can be a daunting task. Karen Donaghay looks at a selection of the best PCW software guaranteed to organise the workings of a budding business



The intricacies of an antique clock pose no problem for Mr Somerton; what gives him a headache is his business administration.

There are some people for whom the inner workings of a grandfather clock hold an infinite fascination. These people are the dabblers in life. As children they were the ones who had grannie's old radio on the kitchen table, in a million pieces, and still managed to put it all

back together – as good as new.

Charles Somerton from Bracknell in Berkshire is one such person. He gave up his job as a history lecturer to indulge in what is his lifelong passion – antique clocks. Bracket clocks and carriage clocks, pocket watches and grandfather's: the whole of his workshop is

teaming with timepieces of every conceivable shape and size. He decided to set up a small shop – called Time Piece – which, over the past six months, has developed a reputation for selling a fine selection of clocks and carrying out, whenever required, an excellent repair and renovating service.

For an enthusiast like Mr Somerton it is a dream come true. Some of his happiest moments are spent pottering around the workshop, and his favourite time of day is, of course, midday. But there is one small snag to this cosy scenario, and that is the dreaded task of administration.

When his shop first opened its doors to the world, the help of his old desktop companion from university days, his PCW 8512, was enlisted. He had big plans for it. "A completely computerised system," he thought. "No more paper work and everything neat and tidy." But six months later, despite Mr Somerton's initial eagerness, nothing more elaborate than LocoScript had ever passed across his PCW screen.

A common enough tale. And yet his PCW is more than capable of handling the accounts, the invoicing and all kinds of administrative tasks. Mr Somerton just doesn't know where to begin. "What do I do?" he complains. "There are so many different programs on the market, I just don't know which way to turn." Mr Somerton is evidently in need of some timely advice which, hopefully, the 8000 Plus team can provide.

Identifying the problems ...

To find out what makes Time Piece tick, we asked Mr Somerton a few pertinent questions...

Q You obviously have a very busy schedule. How does the day begin for you?

A Well, I usually get up quite early, and I check my diary to see if I've made any appointments. I have a memory like a sieve and I always have to write everything down. If I have any prior arrangements, they will usually be either an auction or an appointment in London. Only last week I called in on one of my contacts, an antique dealer in Chelsea who passed on a lovely old French cloisonne clock, to restore for one of his clients.

Q Do you have any special methods for keeping track of all of your contacts?

A No, I just have a little address book, and it goes with me everywhere. I must admit though, I should adopt a more organised approach.

Q So, what is next in the day, assuming that you are not out on an appointment?

A I go into the workshop, which is just behind the shop. There will always be a couple of pieces which are due to be picked up that day, so I check that they are finished and that the bills are ready.

Q How do you organise your bills?

A Oh dear, there's that word again. I'm afraid I don't organise them at all. I just write them out, keeping a copy for myself. When the money comes in, I write "paid" across the bill.

Q And the unpaid bills: what about them?

A Every so often I go through all of them and write to those people who haven't paid.

Q Do you have any idea of how much is owed to you, right now?

A Yes, I do, but it is only an estimate.

Q And, dare I say it, what about accounts?

A I tend to leave all of that to my accountant to

sort out. All of my receipts go into the top drawer of my desk and at the end of the tax year, I take them all out and give them to him.

Q Does your present system ever give you any major problems?

A Not at first. But lately I am getting more and more work on my hands. Sometimes I need to invest some money in an expensive item, such as a Vienna wall clock I bought last month. It was a good investment, but I found myself running into cash problems. Fortunately some of my customers owed me money and I was able to hurry them along.

Q Not an ideal situation though.

A Well, this is exactly where I was hoping the PCW would be able to help. I would definitely like to feel more in control of the situation. The problem is that any program I use needs to be very straightforward, otherwise there is always the chance that I will slip back into my old ways.

... and finding the solutions

Mr Somerton is absolutely right about one thing: his PCW can help. What he needs is a far clearer picture of what is happening in his business at any given time. The most serious problem looming on the horizon is one of cash flow. Pending transactions could and should be taken into account.

Another problem is that he relies very heavily on his accountant: letting go of the reins rather too much. If Mr Somerton wants to keep his business under control, he definitely needs an accounting program. He has a lot to learn about the world of business, so we were on the look-out for a uncomplicated, jargon-free system.

The next item on the agenda is some way of keeping his

names and addresses in an organised fashion. This will become progressively more important as his network of customers and contacts grows. The obvious solution is to invest in a database. A mailmerge would be a useful addition.

There are other ways in which the PCW can help Mr Somerton, involving very little change to his daily routine. To present a more professional image to his customers and provide a record of his repair and renovation work, a job evaluation program would be ideal.

We chose a selection of programs, aimed at transforming Time Piece into a streamlined operation: like any other truly professional business.

Simple Accounts II

£69.95

Cornix Software

0234 219969

Mr Somerton is not exactly a financial whizz kid, so we chose for him a simple accounting package: one that avoids all of the jargon so beloved of accountants. The system is very easy to operate, and will keep his money well under control. In fact the only thing he will need to know about money matters, in order to run the system, is the difference between raising an invoice (classed as a sale) and receiving a bill (classed as a purchase).

This accounting package has two more categories allowing him to distinguish between when a bill is sent out or received and when the money actually changes hands. An invoice issued or a bill received does not necessarily mean a transaction completed.

It may sound like no big deal, but to Mr Somerton this simple distinction is a godsend. With so many regular customers, he often sends out bills without receiving any payment until the next month. This can land him in some awful muddles – any accounting system needs to tell him exactly where he stands. That includes how much cash he actually has, as well as how much he owes and is owed.

There is only one irritation when using Simple Accounts. It is a package which demands the full attention of the user. Once an entry has been confirmed, it becomes impossible to delete it. This is because accountants, the world over, frown upon such practices. Apparently, the proper way to change an entry is to enter the exact opposite of the original, thereby cancelling it out.

If Mr Somerton insists upon the right to change his mind, it will cost him an extra £29.95. The additional software, called the Entry Change Utility can also be purchased from Cornix Software.

In his own words

"This program was great. It asks you a series of simple questions and, before you know it, you have a working accounting system on your hands. The only questions I got stuck on were the VAT questions. I recently registered for

VAT (Value Added Tax), and I had to find out a bit more about it before filling out those questions.

Basically, whenever I enter a sale (of a clock or a service) into the program, it allows for the percentage of VAT I need to charge and even keeps a running total. When I buy materials from another VAT registered supplier, the program automatically allows for this, by asking me what percentage of VAT I paid on the purchase. The total VAT paid out on purchases is then subtracted from the VAT I charged on the sales. This is done automatically within the program, so that, at any time, I can find out how much money I owe the VAT man.

The program should be able to keep my accountant happy as well. It provides a detailed record of all sales and purchases and can provide reports on either. Since my accounts no longer need to be started from scratch, I'm hoping to save at least seventy quid on my next accountant's bill.

What I really liked about Simple Accounts is that the program does all of the running. You simply choose the correct menu and the program asks you to key in certain information. It is all based on common sense really. You set up the program initially to recognise certain accounts – such as a loan account, an ordinary bank account or a cash account, which in my case is the till. Every time money goes in or out of one of these accounts, you enter details of the transaction – even when it is a transfer from one account to another.

The program records what type of transaction is taking place and you end up with a complete picture of what is happening in your business. The one point you need to be careful of is differentiating between different types of sale or purchase. Once you have defined a category – like Motoring Expenses – you don't want to have to go back and change it later.

In general, I'm very pleased with this program. It is much simpler than I expected, and is also genuinely useful. I can tell how much money is in any of my accounts at any time. I can find out how much money I owe out, and how much my customers owe me. I even have an idea of what I owe the VAT man. This program has made me feel like a real business man at last!"

Mr Somerton defines his sale categories: making the distinction between a normal sale, a repair or a restoration

Here is the screen that he must fill in when he makes a sale. Here he receives £67.19 by cheque for a repair job

A summary of Mr Somerton's financial position is available in this easily accessed screen

A more detailed report is shown here. Mr Somerton chose the option to see a summary of all of his January sales

Job Estimating**£79.90****Cornix Software****0234 219969**

This little package is perfect for Mr Somerton. Although it wasn't something he had on his shopping list, this program might have been written for him personally. Like the previous package, it shouldn't take him very long to get to grips with it, as it is very easy to use.

Doing repairs is a funny old business. Most customers need to have some idea of the cost, before they splash out on luxuries. Getting Uncle Vincent's grandfather clock to chime just the twelve times at midnight, instead of the habitually irritating thirteen is unlikely to be top of the family budget, unless they have been watching too many horror movies.

The problem with the repair and restoration business is that each job is different to the last. There are no hard and fast rules to go by, yet quick evaluations are a crucial part of the service to the customer.

This Job Estimating program can produce a quote or an estimate for the customer. It does this on the basis of a whole bevy of details that the user feeds into the database on setting up. Such

details include the buying and selling costs of individual components, and labour costs - ie, how much charged per hour. First, the program calculates exactly how much the job in hand will cost a) the user and b) the customer.

Then, Job Estimating will produce either an estimate or, if you prefer, a final quotation for the customer. Finally, it will provide a detailed report of each repair or restorative task that Mr Somerton undertakes. This includes details of the actual cost of the job, the quoted price and the profit made.

In his own words

"I wasn't too sure about the value of this program until I tried it out. It does seem to be one of those things that you don't know you need until you recruit its help. I could probably live without it. On the other hand, it does greatly enhance my working habits.

The main benefit as far as I am concerned is that it allows me to produce a printed bill or estimate, with its own letter head that looks extremely professional. This system allows me to keep records of my repair and restoration jobs, in an far more organised fashion.

I make sure the reference number for each repair ties in with the reference number given in the Simple Accounts system. This makes it easy to coordinate

the two and create a more streamlined way of working.

The other great advantage of using this package is that it allows me to make a quick but accurate assessment of how much a given job will cost both me and my customer. These days, when a customer brings a clock into the workshop I sit down at the PCW straight away, tap in the details, and produce a printed estimate of the price. Before using this program, I used to be somewhat haphazard in my estimations.

The program works by keeping a file of how much each component costs, including labour cost. These are split into categories, such as metals and wood. To find out, for example, how much the customer is charged for an ounce of silver I tap in METAL then choose SILVER. Finally, I enter the amount I intend to use.

The price is then automatically put into the quote. To produce a complete quotation or estimate, all I ever have to do is tap in the details of what I expect to use on that particular time piece.

Even now, there are the odd occasions when I get it wrong, and a job ends up costing more than I originally thought. The good thing is that, when this happens, the customer can now see the reasons for the increase, clearly laid out in their final bill."

```

NEW JOB COSTING          Reference : 012461
Quantity  Units  Description
*****
3.00 ounce silver @ 3.00 = 9.00
1.00 spring 7mm @ 0.09 = 0.09
3.00 hour labour @ 10.00 = 30.00

*****
Logged Selling Price : 39.09   Job Total 39.09
                               Cost Total 7.84
                               Profit 31.25

                               Press RETURN to Continue
  
```

The screen that Mr Somerton filled out for the restoration of a clock is shown above. The prices of the components used are clearly shown. If Mr Somerton wishes to override the final price, he can do so by changing the logged selling price. Below the details saved in the database for the component silver is shown. It is categorised as part of the metals group

```

ALTER/VIEW COMPONENT
Component Type : metals
Description >>>silver
Units >>>ounce
Selling Price per ounce >>> 3.00
Cost Price per ounce >>> 2.59

A = Alter      M = Menu
  
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TIME PIECE
Clock Specialist:
Antique clocks brought and sold
Quality repairs and restoration

Mr Martin
32 lakely Drive
Brierton
Eastbourne

04.01.91

QUOTATION

Restoration
George III bracket clock

Detailed as :-

Job Reference : 012461

Quantity	Units	Description			
3.00	ounce	silver	@	3.00	= 9.00
1.00	spring	7mm	@	0.09	= 0.09
3.00	hour	labour	@	10.00	= 30.00
Total Price					39.09
Vat @ 15%					5.86
Total Including Vat					44.95

The finished quotation is shown here. A special letter head for Time Piece is printed at the top. The address of the customer is shown below - useful if window envelopes are used. The components are clearly listed, although this is optional. Mr Somerton has completed this job, so the printout is headed as a quotation rather than an estimate. The VAT is worked out automatically and added onto the quoted price. Mr Somerton can, at this stage, go and add the details given here to his Simple Accounts program

LocoFile and LocoMail £49.90

Locomotive Software
0306 740606

How could we resist? This selection of Locomotive offerings are the obvious solution to Mr Somerton's information crisis. He is already familiar with LocoScript II, having made the upgrade during his note-collating days at university. What could be a more convenient remedy for the customer files and the mailouts than the combination of LocoFile and LocoMail?

LocoFile is basically a database, allowing Mr Somerton to keep all of his customers' names and addresses on the PCW, and perhaps details of his suppliers as well. When combined with LocoMail and LocoScript, this allows him to produce mailshots – when he is sending out monthly bills to some of his customers, for example.

The asking price

So how much did it cost Mr Somerton to set up a completely computerised system? In fact, the combined virtues of an accounting system, a mailmerger, a database and a job estimating program cost him less than two hundred pounds.

LocoFile + LocoMail	£49.90
Simple Accounts	£69.95
Job Estimating	£79.90
Total	£199.75

Since Mr Somerton was already using LocoScript II he didn't need to buy this. For LocoScript I users this is an extra cost of £29.95. LocoMail and LocoFile can also be bought separately – costing £29.95 and £34.95 respectively.

The numbers to ring if you are interested in following in Mr Somerton's footsteps are Locomotive Software on 0306 740606 for the Loco products, and Cornix Software – their number is 0234 219969 – for the Simple Accounts and the Job Estimating programs.

We are trying to make things as easy as possible for Mr Somerton and the main advantage of using LocoMail and LocoFile are that they are completely compatible with LocoScript II – something Mr Somerton has already mastered. Using LocoMail, he can merge a standard letter written in LocoScript II with the addresses saved on a LocoFile database providing a truly integrated solution.

In his own words

"At first I found LocoMail and LocoFile a little daunting. There are two complete books with each program and I didn't have time to read them both in their entirety. I eventually found what I needed to know, which was how to set up an address file – actually a fairly simple task.

Once this was successfully completed, I had to learn to find my way around. LocoFile looks very much like an old fashioned card index, which was a pleasant surprise for me.

The first thing I noticed about my new system, was that suddenly, to my delight, I could now find any customer or business contact, just by typing in their name. The next step was to divide them up into categories, and I can now list my customers, trade contacts and suppliers separately.

My favourite, however, was LocoMail. It still amazes me to see it in action – whisking through my letters. Whenever I do a repair job that isn't paid directly, I find the customer's name on my LocoFile database, and enter "No" into the Paid box. Once a month, I send out bills to the relevant customers. This used to take ages, but with LocoMail all I need to do is enter the name of the letter and the name of my address file. It produces all of the letters for me, by checking which customers in the file are marked "No".

The fact that I can do all of this from my enhanced LocoScript menu is definitely a bonus. I'm sure that I still have a lot to learn about both programs, but they have already proved their usefulness to the Time Piece enterprise." ●

A typical entry in Mr Somerton's LocoFile database: the address and salutation – used in letter writing – are both kept on record. Trade contacts would be marked in the class box as "trade"

This standard LocoMail letter is only sent to customers who have not paid. The categories match those of the database

In the final letter, the address, salutation and date are inserted by the merging facility of LocoMail

The finishing touch

Mr Somerton is obviously well pleased with his selection of goodies. He is a lot more organised, and this new outlook is apparent to his customers, who feel that they are dealing with a professionally-run organisation. It has taken some of the strain out of his administrative workload and should even save him money in accountant's fees.

Mr Somerton needs to continue to experiment with the programs he has: there are undoubtedly lots of ways this system can be fine-tuned to make it even more responsive to his needs. To find out more about LocoMail and LocoFile he could take a look at our tutorials, that began in June '89 and February '89 respectively.

When he feels like expanding there are of course several additions he can make to his PCW suite of programs. One product we originally considered for Mr Somerton was an organiser program: the computer equivalent of a filofax. After all, as he admitted himself, his memory is not too good.

The price, however, was somewhat prohibitive. For example, Datadiary, reviewed in the June 1989 issue, costs a

further £16.95. (Ring A4 Ideas on 0249 815082 to find out more.) This kind of program is really designed for those people who switch on their computer, automatically every morning. We thought Mr Somerton could afford at this stage to stick with his diary, until life became a shade more frenetic.

For the next addition to his software collection, Mr Somerton could do a lot worse than invest in a copy of Flipper 2 Plus. He is trying to create a co-ordinated suite of programs, and so the facility to flip between his Job Estimating program and Simple Accounts, or even his LocoFile customer database would be a great help. This definitely qualifies as one of those programs that, once experienced, join the ranks of the truly indispensable. Flipper is also cheap: £29.95 from Software Imperative (0225 425315).

For those of you just starting out, remember: assess your own needs carefully. These are not the only products on the market, and you need to be sure that your choice of software is right for you. For an overview of some of the best accounting software around see our May 1990 issue of 8000 Plus.

PCW SUPPLIES

PRINTER RIBBONS

	MULTISTRIKE		NYLON	
	1-11	12+	1-11	12+
PCW8256/8512	£3.10	£2.75	£2.60	£2.35
PCW9512	£2.20	£1.99	£2.20	£1.99

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The Computer Football Pools Predictor

The amazing POOLSMaster program is by far the best Pools Predictor we have ever seen. In just 10 weeks of trying this program ourselves, we won no less than 12 dividends, the largest being nearly £300. Mr F. C. Hammond from Essex won nearly £10,000.00 in just 16 weeks. In his own words 'It's a licence to print money'. POOLSMaster is simple to use and requires only that you keep the league tables up to date using your usual newspaper.

The result of many years research into the Football Pools by the programmer Martin Evans of C.C.S., the program is a masterpiece of expertise, and is simplicity itself to use.

- Predicts Homes, Aways and Draws
- No fiddly typing in of teams names etc and no redundant databases.
- Instant read-out or Handcopy if you have a printer.
- Uses scientific formula based on recent form home and away, league position, goals scored etc. It has long been realised that certain combinations of these factors return a much higher than average of draws than the laws of average would expect. POOLSMaster looks for these factors and analyses their significance to give you the best possible chance of a win.
- Also has a 'Sequence Predictor' option. Many people believe that certain numbers on the coupon come up more often than others, and over a season patterns do seem to develop. The program analyses these patterns and predicts the numbers most likely to come up next. Certainly more scientific than sticking a pin in, or family birthdays etc.

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THE GRAPHOLOGIST

This program is a must for anyone interested in analysing their handwriting, or analysing other peoples. It is also very useful for analysing prospective employees handwriting. To use the program, a sample of handwriting is obtained, preferably in ink. From the main menu of the program you will be prompted and guided to examine each detail of the sample. You will then be taken through deeper and deeper sets of sub menus, all prompting you for relevant details of the writing, and the points to watch for, and add to the file if applicable.

Upon completion you are left with a disk file up to 15 pages long (depending on the depth of detail you choose), this file can then be edited within your word processor to produce a full report for the writer.

Fully experienced Graphologists can charge almost what they like for a full analysis, so this could prove a very lucrative business venture for you.

We must however stress, that unless you are experienced in graphology, then we can in no way guarantee the accuracy of the information that the program provides. If you are an enthusiastic amateur or just curious, then this program could provide hours of entertainment, whilst teaching you the finer art of this fascinating subject.

The text within THE GRAPHOLOGIST was researched and written by a top London graphologist/criminologist James Woodward. The software was written by Martin Evans our consultant software writer.

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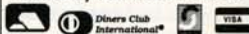
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The Good Club & Training Guide

With such a variety of software for the PC currently on the market, learning how to get the best out of your machine can often seem to be a daunting trek through poorly-written manuals and stodgy jargon.

For the would-be LocoScript, CP/M or BASIC expert, a PCW User Club can provide an ideal source of knowledge. An informal atmosphere can be very productive – and there's no better way to learn than with the one-to-one help of an expert.

Alternatively, you could recruit the aid of such an expert to your home. There are numerous training organisations throughout the country, some of which send representatives to visit you either at your home or the workplace. Other courses are conducted on a correspondence basis, or part-time in colleges and schools.

Below is a selection of clubs and training organisations which can offer such help. Why not make contact; it could be an inexpensive, effective way to a better understanding of what your PCW can do for you.

Clubs

York Amstrad Computer Club
Enterprise Social Club, 17 Nunnery Lane, York (address for meetings only)
Enquiries: **Simon Williams 0906 40164**

Scotwest.PCW
19, Porton Place, Old Greenock Road, Bishopton, Scotland
Enquiries: **Iain Lang 0505 863916**

Ground Floor User Group
Holme Street, Hebden Bridge West Yorkshire
Enquiries: **Jae Campbell 0422 844991**

Retford PCW User Group
14 Machin Close, Tuxford, Nr Newark Nottinghamshire NG22 0JZ
Enquiries: **Paul Tew 0777 870038**

CP/M and MS DOS User's Group
43 Birkbeck Road, Wimbledon,

London SW19 8NZ
Enquiries: **David Nesbitt 081 543 0824**

Hampshire PCW User's Group
Unit 5, Cable Street, Northam, Southampton, Hampshire (address for meetings only)
Enquiries: **Paul Day** (above address)

Hereford Computer Club
18 Church Street, Hereford Herefordshire HR1 2LR
Enquiries: **David Rose 0432 267213**

Teesside Amstrad User Group
8 Knayton Grove, Greenvale, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland TS19 7RW
Enquiries: **Gladys Baker 0642 580018**

M25 User Group
58 Islip Gardens, Northolt Middlesex UB5 5BY
Enquiries: **Tony Brown 081 841 3666**

Littlemore Amstrad PCW User Group Peers School (Adult Education Centre), Littlemore, Oxford
Enquiries: **R G Hughes 0865 242720**

The Worldwide Amstrad Computer Club (WACCI)
9 South Close Twickenham TW2 5JE
Enquiries: **Steve Williams** (above address)

Training

Banna Word Processing
29 New Bond Street, London W1Y 9HD
Subjects: LocoScript 1 & 2, SuperCalc 2, Cardbox
Enquiries: **071 493 3336**

Computer Training Centres UK Ltd
Exchange Buildings, Upper Hinton Road, Bournemouth BH1 2HH
Enquiries: **0202 299676**

Dynamic Sales and Training
47 Goldsworth Road, Woking, Surrey
Subjects: LocoScript 1 & 2, dBase, dBase II, SuperCalc 2
Enquiries: **0483 756914**

Headline Communication Ltd
PO Box 22, Hereford HR4 8UW
Subjects: LocoScript 1 & 2, CP/M,

dBase II, SuperCalc 2
Enquiries: **0432 271598**

Horsham Office Skills Training
Unit 2, 24 London Road, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 1AY
Subjects: LocoScript 1 & 2, Wordstar
Enquiries: **0403 211440**

John S Blandford
15 St Albans Road, Sandridge, St Albans, Herts AL4 9LA
Subjects: LocoScript 1 & 2, LocoMail, Mallard BASIC
Enquiries: **0727 59913**

Linkom Training
32 Hill Street, Totterdown, Bristol
Subjects: LocoScript 1 & 2, Sage Accounts
Enquiries: **0270 717435**

No Hassle Computing
36 Tantallon Road, Balham, London SW12 8DG
Subjects: LocoScript 1 & 2, Supercalc, Cracker, Masterfile 8000
Enquiries: **081 675 3139**

Molesley Education
Flat 3, 10, Matham Road, East Molesley
Subjects: LocoScript 1 & 2, Loco PC
Enquiries: **081 941 1364**

Office International
247-257 Euston Road, London NW1 2HY
Subjects: LocoScript 1 & 2, Cardbox, NewWord, Supercalc 2, Sage Accounts, LocoMail
Enquiries: **071 387 9339**

Off the Shelf Training Services
5a West Street, Bognor Regis, West Sussex, PO21 1UB
Subjects: LocoScript 1 & 2, LocoMail
Enquiries: **0243 827778**

Rodesign
195 Milwards, Harlow, Essex CM19 4SJ
Subjects: MicroDesign, ProScan
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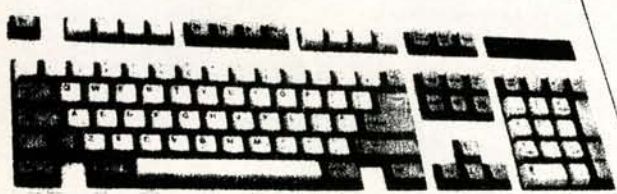
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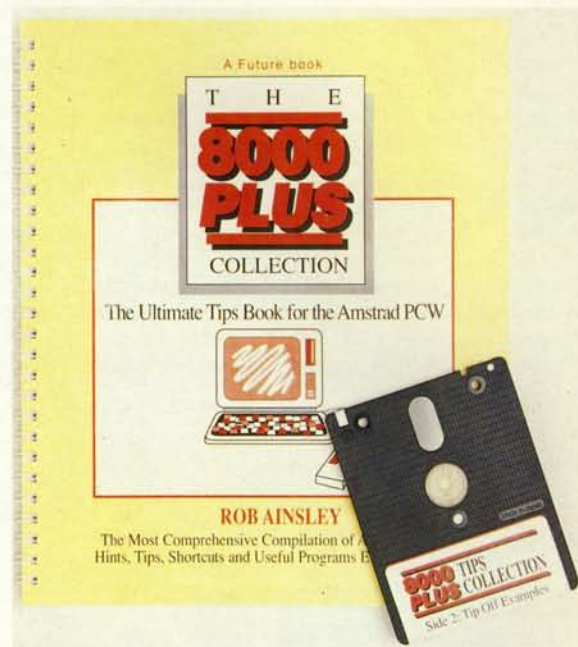
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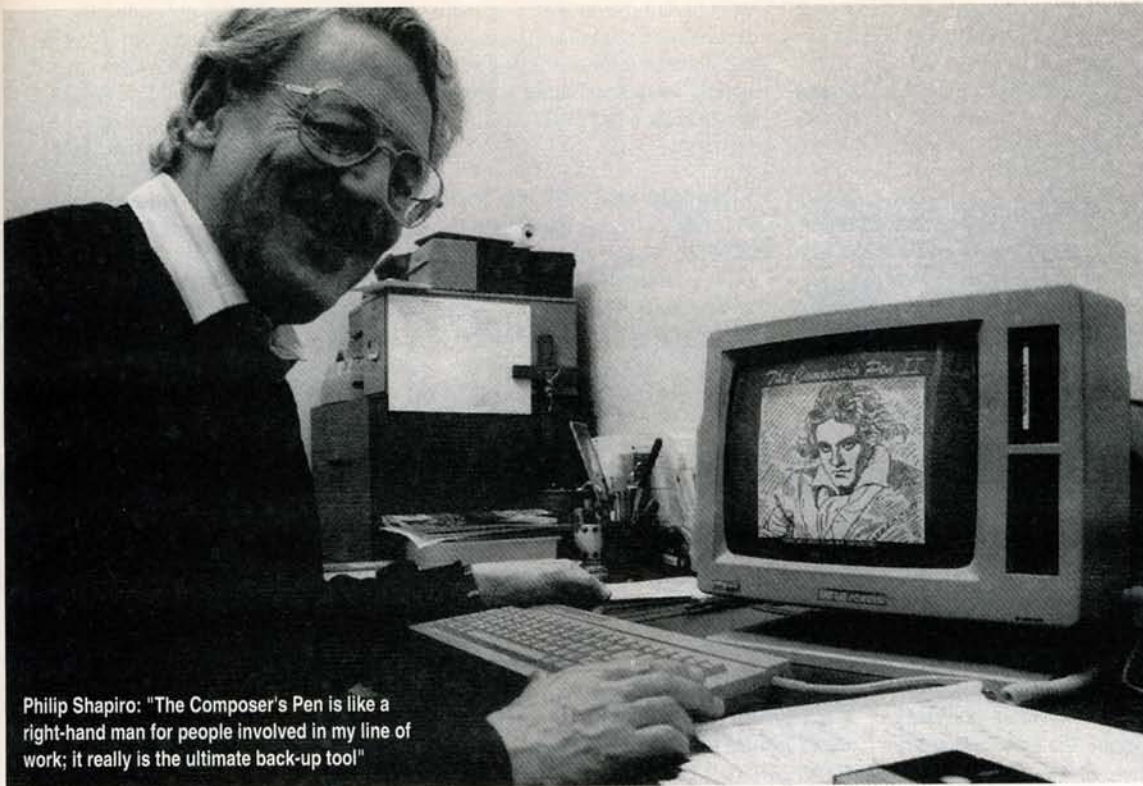
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Philip Shapiro: "The Composer's Pen is like a right-hand man for people involved in my line of work; it really is the ultimate back-up tool"

Melody Maker

Can the PCW really be used as an instrument of harmony? Sophie Lankenau went along to talk to one composer with a very satisfactory arrangement

Phil Shapiro, composer, jazz pianist, arranger and music teacher, describes himself as a dinosaur. This is rather an inappropriate self-summing up when you meet the man himself; a semi-retired professional musician, with a passion for his craft and a desire to pass on the benefit of his wisdom to others. It transpires, however, that the prehistoric analogy was one to match a former life – a life without the PCW.

Five years ago, Philip Shapiro would never have imagined that a computer could change his life. A confirmed two-fingered typist, his trusty electric typewriter served the administrative needs of his self-employed status more than adequately. At the time, Philip's work involved arranging (or orchestrating, as it is more traditionally known) and transcribing music for people who lacked either the time or the ability to do it themselves.

"I would receive sheets of hand-written scores, usually in pencil or half illegible, and my job would be to arrange a piece for various instruments in an orchestral group," Philip explained. "I would quite happily have carried on doing it the way I was. But one day, a friend got hold of the demo disc of a program called The

Composer's Pen, and that," said Philip, "is when my whole business changed".

Philip didn't have a PCW at this point, and the friend who told him about The Composer's Pen could only describe what the program was supposed to do, rather than demonstrate it to him. So impressed was Philip by the idea, that he went out shopping – for a copy of the program – and for a PCW upon which to run it.

"I suppose it is fairly unusual to buy a computer on the strength of discovering one piece of software for it, but I knew at once that The Composer's Pen could make all the difference to my work," he told us. "I went out and bought a PCW8512, and I haven't really looked back since," he laughed.

"Right-hand man"

Of course, once Philip got the machine home, he discovered LocoScript and CP/M. "I had no one to help or advise me when it came to learning the native programs," he explained, "and I must admit, the manuals were like double dutch to me. I didn't even know what a byte was. It was simply a case of sitting down and ploughing through the information supplied."

With LocoScript mastered, Philip was able to explore The Composer's

Pen in more depth. "As a musician, you use the musical language to the nth degree – you need all the tools possible to back up your work – just like being a journalist or a writer, I suppose. The Composer's Pen is like a right-hand man for people involved in my line of work; it really is the ultimate back-up tool," he explained.

When he was first experimenting with the program, Philip was in frequent contact with its manufacturers, Composit Software. "The after-sales backup that Composit offer is second to none," Philip told us. "They were prepared to go into the minutest details for me so that I could be sure I was operating the program correctly. I really cannot commend them highly enough," said Philip.

Once it was installed, Philip was able to put the program to extensive use. As an arranger, he needed to be able to write certain pieces of music for different instruments, so that a group of musicians would be able to read from specially-adapted scores.

Instrumental details

"You can also have a piece of music written with the parts for every instrument included, so that everyone has an idea of when the

Going for a song

Remember those good old school performances of musicals like 'Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat', 'HMS Pinafore' and 'The Pirates of Penzance'? Well, if you are a teacher or music tutor on the lookout for some new material, get in touch with Philip Shapiro. He has written four such works including: a nativity piece called 'Follow the Star', an Easter story entitled 'Seven Days to Salvation' and the life story of John the Baptist – to name but three. All the works would be ideal for that end of term concert!

Duet soon!

So adept has Philip Shapiro become at using The Composer's Pen, he is willing to offer his knowledge and experience to new users. Philip will happily respond to telephone or postal queries about the program. So, if you've got Composer's block, why not get in touch with Philip and see if he can help. He is also keen to meet fellow PCW users in his area to swap ideas and advice. Telephone him on 021 747 6675, or write to 16, Burrow Hill Close, Castle Bromwich, Birmingham, West Midlands.

Quick on the draw

The Composer's Pen is available from Composit Software on 0952 595436, priced £74.75. Micro Design 2 can be obtained from Creative Technology on 0889 567160 for £59.95.

other instruments are going to come in," he explained. "This includes vocal parts as well."

The program is perfect for composing from scratch – as Philip explained. "When you want to start a new piece of work, all you do is press [C] for 'create', just like you do in LocoScript. You are then presented with a variety of different options; choose the instrument that you are writing the piece for, and type in an abbreviated form of the word. This means that when it comes to printing the score, you can have the instrument listed in the left margin."

After the instrument comes the real composition. You have to enter the clef – the range of musical pitch, and the time signature – how many beats there are per bar.

"There are so many features to this program," Philip enthused. "You can

even have different sizes and styles of text running underneath the staves for the words of a song which you are composing. I would call it the greatest tool which an arranger could possibly have," he added.

One bite and you're hooked

Philip describes his introduction to the PCW as "a case of taking one bite and being completely hooked". Not content to limit himself to word processing and The Composer's Pen, he has also become a very competent Micro Designer. "I discovered MicroDesign through talking to the people at Composit. The Composer's Pen was written with the Creative Technology team as consultants, and the two programs work perfectly together," he told us.

"I write a piece of music using The

Composer's Pen, then select the option to save it as a disc file," said Philip. "Any bulky text which has to go with the score, I prepare in LocoScript. The correspondence course which I run (see box for more details) is a mixture of large chunks of text interspersed with musical notation. I can then import the various different parts into Micro Design, and assemble them in a particular way," he continued.

As an arranger, Philip is often dealing with the work of one musician several times. The Composer's Pen is particularly useful for this kind of situation.

Record score

"Because you can save a score to disc, it means that there is a permanent record of the work you have done for someone. So, if that person decides that he or she wants a specific piece re-worked for another instrument, all I have to do is load the disc, call up the score, and make changes where necessary. If I was having to do that manually, it would be very time-consuming," he told us.

Indeed, it is not just scores which have to be held in permanent computer memory for Philip. He also has a substantial customer base, which he has to have close at hand. The need for a database of some description led Philip to explore still further the power of his PCW.

"Masterfile is perfectly adequate for the amount of records I need to keep. It can also cope with my business accounts, as it has a totals facility on the money entry," he continued.

Philip seems delighted with the software which he has been using on his PCW – but, as ever, nothing is perfect.

Critical acclaim

"There aren't many things which I can criticise The Composer's Pen for," said Philip, "because Composit have made a lot of changes to it since it came out. The first version did lack a lot of features, but now it has been tailored to the needs of the professional musician. There are some irritating parts about it, such as the slow scrolling. You have to sit and watch it go through every page until the destination is reached. That can be very time consuming," he explained.

We asked Philip if there was anything he wished he had known about the PCW before he bought it. "I wish I had known about it four years ago when it first came out," he told us, "because it was cheaper then! I also wish that I had known about 8000 Plus sooner – I've learned a lot from the magazine. Other than that, I am delighted with my choice," he concluded. For the moment, Philip will be continuing his work as an arranger, and is hoping to have some of his short compositions published.

"I am, I suppose, semi-retired," he told us, "but I suspect that the PCW will be keeping me very busy for many years to come. You know," he added, "it's a bit like being a musician – once you are involved quite deeply with the subject, you find that you just can't let go." ●

Calling the tune

Philip Shapiro has written and produced a revolutionary music tutorial course, available to students on a correspondence basis. 'The Shapiro Method', as it has been christened, aims to introduce people to the world of music in a quite different way to the usual classroom or night school scenario.

"Most people who gave up learning to play an instrument did so because they hated their classes," said Philip. "There's always the memory of turning up to a class without having done your practice, and dreading the wrath of the teacher concerned," he added. "The Shapiro Method is for those who still have a desire to learn, and for those people who simply haven't got the time to attend classes in the day time or the evening," Philip explained.

The course comes in three parts, Preliminary, Intermediate and Advanced. Each level is accompanied by an audio cassette and a detailed written booklet. Students can take as long as they wish to

work through the modules – one feature which Philip feels will encourage the part-time pupil. "There's nothing worse than feeling rushed when you are trying to get to grips with a new subject, whatever it is," explained Philip. "The Shapiro Method encourages the student to learn as and when they have the time to do so," he continued.

Having the PCW has enabled Philip to produce extensive backup notes for the course. "I prepare my notes in LocoScript, and I can produce the scores and various other musical illustrations using The Composer's Pen," he explained. "I then import both sections into Micro Design, and set a page up for the tutorial. The three packages make up the ideal team for producing the course," he added.

The Shapiro method tries to dispense with what

Philip calls 'the Janet and John' way of learning. The approach is easy to follow, but it has the student achieving useful goals very early on in their learning.

The audio tape and the notes work in perfect harmony with one another. With the tape on, and the booklet open, the student reads through the

text while it is being spoken. When, in the text, a note or a bar of music is presented in graphic form on the page, it can be heard as actual music on the audio tape. So, in the preliminary stages, where a scale is shown on the page, it will be played on the tape. The notes and the tape are extremely well annotated, and it must be said that even the 8000 Plus team, recent winners of the Tone Deaf Award for Total Amusability, were beginning to pick up the basics of playing an instrument.

Like any other course, the work done in each module of The Shapiro Method is marked by Philip. "At the end of each section, there is a test sheet which students return to me for evaluation," explained Philip. "Students are not sent the next module until they have had the previous one marked."

Not only does the course contain instruction on the practical side of the learning process, but it also tells you about the historical aspects of the subject. The section on jazz gives a detailed account of the music's origins, which adds tremendously to the student's perspective of how it should sound.

"What I am trying to do is to convey the feel of music to people," explained Philip. "No one can wave a wand and say that you will become a musician, but my method of teaching gives the student access to the basic tools which they will need to start. The rest is up to them – if they have a will to succeed, and to share the wonderful experience of being able to play an instrument, then the rest will follow."

Phone Philip on 021 747 6675 for more details.



The Shapiro method dispenses with the 'Janet and John' way of learning music

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Upgrading from earlier versions

There has been a continuous process of updating Investor since it first appeared (I have three different versions of the earlier program) and it isn't immediately apparent which one you have. However, this latest version is written in machine code and all the earlier ones were in BASIC so the .BAS file tails will give the game away. Upgrades for registered owners only cost £12; this includes a data conversion program for the old type data files and the money is well spent.

The most obvious improvement is in the speed at which the program runs - machine code is like lightning compared to BASIC - and every

operation is much faster. This alone is worth the money.

Other worthwhile advantages include better graphics, a wider choice of moving averages for charting, improved user-friendliness, calculation of capital gains tax liability allowing for inflation, ability to overlay graphs and logic-checking of all operator inputs. The general feel of the new program is similar to that of its predecessors and it doesn't take long to master the changes.

B & BB Software have recently relocated; the new one is 2 Brawdy Crescent, Brawdy, Haverfordwest, Dyfed SA62 6NN.

the share's lowest level and then analyses its recovery. Shares are listed in order of performance and the percentage annual growth rate since the recovery started is also shown.

Period Growth Analysis enables you to look at growth over a selected period. This can be varied from as little as two data entries up to five years. In practice, you would be likely to choose a period of a few weeks or months depending on the overall performance of the stock market. There is a complete list of shares in order of performance.

The final routine is Best Buys. Here the program carries out the three routines already mentioned and lists the top 25 shares in each category. Shares will be marked with a rating of 99 if the program identifies a golden cross. This is the point where the 5 and 20 week moving averages cross with both going up and is reckoned a strong buy indicator.

Graphic interpretation

If the idea of letting Investor do all the thinking doesn't appeal, you can use the graphics facility and work out your own analysis of performance. Two graphs are displayed, one showing the previous 5 years and the other the past 12 months. Unfortunately both are rather small but you can use the expansion facility to get a better scale, though this may result in some of the lower parts of the graph being lost. One share or index can be overlaid on another, moving averages can be plotted for periods of 5, 10, 20 or 40 weeks and the most recent recovery point is shown. There is a choice of logarithmic or linear scales.

Once you have decided what to buy, the Portfolio Monitor comes into play. Here you can keep portfolios of up to 40 shares and up to 20 cash accounts.

It is important to enter the names of your shares in exactly the same way they appear in the stock data file, otherwise the program will not be able to update the value of your holdings when you tell it to revalue. Enter details of share purchases as you make them, putting in yields and P/E ratios from the newspaper. Irritatingly if you make a

mistake in inputting data about a share you may have to go to the end of the input and then erase the share and start again. There is no ability to return to an earlier field if you make a mistake.

Capital idea!

The graphics routine is available from the Portfolio Monitor and can be used to look at or compare shares held in the portfolio. Although the program gives indications of what to buy, it is less clear on what or when to sell, and you will need the monitor with its graphics to help you work this out.

A useful facility is the stop/loss which will flag up a warning if the price falls by more than a preset percentage below the highest price recorded in the stock data file. You select the percentage according to the degree of risk you want to take. A significant fall, for example, could well be a sell indicator.

You can, of course, have more than one portfolio. Indeed this may well be essential as each share purchase is treated as a separate holding. Thus if you take up a rights issue or opt for shares in lieu of dividend you will need a new entry. Although this may seem

Portfolio: 8000		PORTFOLIO MONITOR				
P/E rate	Stop/Loss	Notes	span	EXIT		
	(£)	(£)	Ann %	(%)	P/E	
Stock Name	Value	Profit	Growth	Yield	Rate	
1 Ithames Water	619	177	44.0	20.0		
2 Williams Hldgs	911	-295	-6.5	1.8		
3 British Gas	1311	501	15.7	5.4		
4 ICI	1010	624	18.7			
5 RTZ	2241	-647	-14.3			

The taxation screen showing the capital gains tax calculation on the sale of BAA shares

Portfolio: 8000		1001008		Review Date: 10Nov89					
Tax Period: 05Apr89 to 05Apr91		Total (net)		Traded	HT	DTT			
Stock Name	Buy Date	Number	Price	Cost	Sold	Price	Cost	Profit	Gain
BAA	23Jul87	118.00	254.0	298	10Nov89	354.0	324	44	-25

The portfolio monitor after panning to the right, showing the stop/loss column and the note facility

cumbersome it does have distinct advantages when it comes to working out capital gains.

There is a file for storing RPI information and Investor uses this to calculate the capital gains tax due every time you sell shares.

If you sell a holding that was acquired at different times, each separate acquisition will have a different tax liability, as will also be the case if you dispose of part of a holding. This CGT calculation is unique to Investor.

Overall, Investor is a good program with a whole range of facilities more than adequate for the needs of the active, PCW-owning investor in the stock market.

Manual labour

Investor's manual is a LocoScript document running to 21 A4 pages which you are advised to print out in draft quality. The best that can be said for this method is that it enables the author to easily update instructions whenever changes are made to the software.

Running the program from a hard disc

Although primarily designed to run from floppy discs, Investor will run from a hard disc and a Cirtech Diamond was used in conjunction with an expanded PCW8256 for the review. Use PIP to copy the necessary files to the hard disc. From side 1 you will need INVESTOR.COM and PRINTME.LOC and from side 2 STOCK.DAT, STOCK.NAM, STOCK.RPI and DEMO.POR. You can erase DEMO.POR once you have finished with it and are ready to create your own portfolios. At the A>, type INVESTOR to start. Strictly speaking, you should also copy ILOAD.COM but the program will run perfectly well without it although you won't get the opening screen and there may initially be some unwanted material from any previous use you may have made of CP/M. If you want to use ILOAD it is

best to rename it as (say) INVEST and then start the program by typing INVEST at the A>.

Investor expects to see a floppy disc in the upper drive and, if you don't have one, it won't recognise any of the data files. A formatted blank floppy will suffice. Data will be stored in the A: drive of the hard disc, not on the floppy. Even on a hard disc the maximum number of names in the Stock Data file is 600.

To avoid cluttering up the directory with program files, it is prudent to keep them out of sight by making them system files with the use of SET, eg SET STOCK.*[SYS]. System files are invisible to simple DIR and PIP commands and are 'hidden files' in LocoScript. System files can be restored to visibility by SET FILENAME[DIR].

Investor

Pluses

- ▲ Records shareholdings, dividends and cash accounts
- ▲ Dividend printout for tax purposes
- ▲ Four methods of share price analysis
- ▲ Unique ability to calculate capital gains tax liability
- ▼ Minuses
- ▼ Graphs are small
- ▼ Minor shortcomings in manual

Ease of use	5/5
Documentation	4/5
Range of features	5/5
Performance	5/5

8000 Plus	
Value Verdict	19/20

Listings

Karen Donaghay shows you how this month's listings can make you the quickest wordgame winner under the sun. We also bring in the New Year with a yuppie-style calendar to fit in your filofax

Wordgame.bas by John Grice

```
Enter number of letters across? 13
Enter number of letters down? 13
Enter row 1 ? nhpxelttuhssos
Enter row 2 ? ponsepatkpfua
Enter row 3 ? gliadyevosnwt
Enter row 4 ? ishtpksgrenfe
Enter row 5 ? wtuuackrvighl
Enter row 6 ? atkrolffocavl
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Enter row 8 ? idambuoenfadt
Enter row 9 ? cosmonautkrue
Enter row 10 ? zarrsetqcsily
Enter row 11 ? arastrongzawi
Enter row 12 ? vseoruljashaz
Enter row 13 ? rgalexertyic
Do you wish to correct any row (y or n)? n
Enter the number of words sought? 3
Enter word 1 ? SOS
Enter word 2 ? BIG
Do you wish to correct any word (y or n)? n
SOS found
BIG found
Ok
```

To set up the wordgame square, simply type in the letters and the hidden words. Wordgame.bas does the searching for you

Find the hidden words, the competitions declare – not least our own wordgame competition on the back page. But the one thing the compilers of such puzzles have yet to realise is that anyone who possesses a PCW, and reads our listings pages, is off to a flying headstart.

A wordgame is, as John Grice so rightly points out, "a test of diligence rather than intelligence" – and, as we all know, the PCW possesses far greater powers of diligence than any mere human being. This program can produce the solution to any word game you care to mention, provided you give it the original square of "random" letters,

and the words you are searching for within the square. But, before you turn to our back page in delight, let me just warn you, we didn't want to spoil it for you. Unlike most wordgame compilers, we don't tell you what the hidden words are. Sorry folks!

This, however, did not deter us from using our own competition square as an example. Not wanting to give you any clues, we asked the program to search for three distinctly non space-age words: big, wig and SOS.

The procedure goes as follows. First you enter the square itself. Then the program asks how many words you are searching for. You enter the hidden words and the computer mulls these over for a while. It prints out a message for each word, stating whether it was found or not, before printing out the resulting square.

The actual words are highlighted in bold when the solution is printed out, and just to make them stand out even more, it also prints them in lower case rather than upper case.

The program works over the whole range of PCWs. However, to produce bold characters for the 9512 there are a few adjustments to be made. Line 40 defines two special printer codes: **p = e + "E"** sets the code to switch on the bold type-face on the dot matrix printer, and **q = e + "F"** sets the code to switch off bold on the dot matrix. Since the

9512 uses a completely different printer – a daisywheel rather than a dot matrix – the printer codes are accordingly different. This means that 9512 owners should change line 40 so that it reads: **40 e = CHR\$(27): p = e + "W": q = e + "&"**

If solving wordgames is not your kind of puzzle, then how about making your own? This program could also be used to compile a wordgame, perhaps for inclusion in a fanzine or newsletter.

To print out your original competition wordgame, simply type in the square as usual but do not specify any hidden words. The square will be printed out, in the normal way, but the words will remain hidden.

The solution can then be printed in the next edition of your fanzine, complete with the highlighted words.

```
N H P X E L T T U H S D S
P O N S E p a t k p f u a
g l i a d y e v o s n w t
i s h t p k s g r e n f e
w t u u a c k r v i g h l
a t k r o l f f o c a v l
e g a n k l l a b i g h i
i d a m b u o e n f a d t
c o s m o n a u t k r u e
z a r r s e t q c s i l y
a r a s t r o n g z a w i
v s e o r u l j a s h a z
r g a l a x y e r t y i c
```

A solution: complete with hidden words

```
10 REM * wordgame *
20 DEFINT a,b,f,g,m,n,t,v,x,y
30 DEFSTR c,d,e,k,p,q,r,s,w,z
40 e=CHR$(27):p=e+"E":q=e+"F"
50 INPUT"Enter number of letters across";tx
60 INPUT"Enter number of letters down";ty
70 DIM r(ty),c(tx,ty),k(tx,ty),d(MAX(tx,ty))
80 PRINT:FOR y=1 TO ty
90 PRINT"Enter row";y;:INPUT r(y)
100 IF LEN(r(y))<>tx THEN PRINT"Error: re-do":GOTO 90
110 NEXT y:PRINT
120 INPUT"Do you wish to correct any row (y or n)";z
130 IF z="n" THEN 160 ELSE IF z<>"y" THEN 120
140 INPUT"Enter number of row";y
150 PRINT"Enter row";y;:INPUT r(y):GOTO 120
```

```
07DF
0DA8
0E18
0A11
19C4
1723
165B
0BF6
1141
1A9F
08FB
1A01
1292
10D0
16AB
```

The original square is entered here, row by row: lines may be corrected if needs be

160 FOR y=1 TO ty:r(y)=UPPER\$(r(y))	10EC
170 FOR x=1 TO tx:c(x,y)=MID\$(r(y),x,1)	11EF
180 k(x,y)=c(x,y):NEXT x,y	0CA6

Two matrices are set up: one is the original - c(x,y) - in upper case , and one keeps the discovered words in lower case - k(x,y)

190 PRINT:INPUT"Enter the number of words sought";t	1DB4
200 DIM w(t),wr(t):FOR a=1 TO t	0F0E
210 PRINT"Enter word"a;;INPUT w(a):NEXT a:PRINT	197E
220 INPUT"Do you wish to correct any word (y or n)";z	1B30
230 IF z="n"THEN 260 ELSE IF z<>"y"THEN 220	129D
240 INPUT"Enter number of word";a	1109
250 PRINT"Re-do "w(a);;INPUT w(a):GOTO 220	142C
260 FOR a=1 TO t:w(a)=UPPER\$(w(a)):NEXT a:PRINT	17B6

The user enters the words here and the program asks whether they wish to correct any mistakes

270 FOR a=1 TO t:g=LEN(w(a)):f=0:ff=0	111F
280 FOR y=1 TO ty	090A
290 n=INSTR(r(y),w(a)):IF n=0 THEN 330	0F9E
300 FOR x=n TO n+g-1	0858
310 k(x,y)=LOWER\$(c(x,y))	0B85
320 NEXT x:f=1:y=ty	0912
330 NEXT y	0491
340 IF f=1 THEN 980	078C

The horizontal lines are searched for the words and, if any are found, they are converted to lower case in the k(x,y) matrix

350 FOR x=1 TO tx:s=""	09E4
360 FOR y=1 TO ty:s=s+c(x,y):NEXT y	10ED
370 n=INSTR(s,w(a)):IF n=0 THEN 410	0E93
380 FOR y=n TO n+g-1	0871
390 k(x,y)=LOWER\$(c(x,y))	0B9D
400 NEXT y:f=1:x=tx	090B
410 NEXT x	048B
420 IF f=1 THEN 980	0788

The equivalent search takes place for the vertical lines

430 FOR ys=1 TO ty-1:s="":m=0	0CC5
440 FOR y=ys TO ty:x=y-ys+1	0E4D
450 IF x<=tx THEN m=m+1:d(m)=c(x,y):s=s+d(m)	1393
460 NEXT y:mx=m	089F
470 n=INSTR(s,w(a)):IF n=0 THEN 540	0EA0
480 FOR m=n TO n+g-1	0867
490 d(m)=LOWER\$(d(m)):NEXT m	0D71
500 m=0:FOR y=ys TO ty:x=y-ys+1	1039
510 IF x>tx THEN 530	0927
520 m=m+1:IF ASC(d(m))>96 THEN k(x,y)=LOWER\$(c(x,y))	16AC
530 NEXT y:f=1:ys=ty	0A0B
540 FOR m=1 TO mx:d(m)="":NEXT m:NEXT ys	1541
550 IF f=1 THEN 980	0793
560 FOR xs=2 TO tx-1:s="":m=0	0CD2
570 FOR x=xs TO tx:y=x-xs+1	0E4A
580 IF y<=ty THEN m=m+1:d(m)=c(x,y):s=s+d(m)	13A9
590 NEXT x:mx=m	08A8
600 n=INSTR(s,w(a)):IF n=0 THEN 670	0E9A
610 FOR m=n TO n+g-1	0856
620 d(m)=LOWER\$(d(m)):NEXT m	0D60

630 m=0;FOR x=xs TO tx:y=x-xs+1	1034
640 IF y>ty THEN 660	0943
650 m=m+1;IF ASC(d(m))>96 THEN k(x,y)=LOWER\$(c(x,y))	16B7
660 NEXT x:f=1:xs=tx	0A0E
670 FOR m=1 TO mx:d(m)="":NEXT m:NEXT xs	1546
680 IF f=1 THEN 980	079E
690 FOR xf=2 TO tx:s="":m=0	0B76
700 FOR x=1 TO xf:y=xf+1-x	0C45
710 IF y<=ty THEN m=m+1:d(m)=c(x,y):s=s+d(m)	1398
720 NEXT x:mx=m	0897
730 n=INSTR(s,w(a)):IF n=0 THEN 800	0E94
740 FOR m=n TO n+g-1	0861
750 d(m)=LOWER\$(d(m)):NEXT m	0D6B
760 m=0;FOR x=1 TO xf:y=xf+1-x	0D96
770 IF y>ty THEN 790	0955
780 m=m+1;IF ASC(d(m))>96 THEN k(x,y)=LOWER\$(c(x,y))	16C2
790 NEXT x:f=1:xf=tx	09FF
800 FOR m=1 TO mx:d(m)="":NEXT m:NEXT xf	14DA
810 IF f=1 THEN 980	078D
820 FOR xs=2 TO tx-1:s="":m=0	0CCC
830 FOR x=xs TO tx:y=xs+tx-x	0F1C
840 IF y<=ty THEN m=m+1:d(m)=c(x,y):s=s+d(m)	13A3
850 NEXT x:mx=m	08A2
860 n=INSTR(s,w(a)):IF n=0 THEN 930	0EAA
870 FOR m=n TO n+g-1	086C
880 d(m)=LOWER\$(d(m)):NEXT m	0D76
890 m=0;FOR x=xs TO tx:y=xs+tx-x	1137
900 IF y>ty THEN 920	0938
910 m=m+1;IF ASC(d(m))>96 THEN k(x,y)=LOWER\$(c(x,y))	16B1
920 NEXT x:f=1:xs=tx	0A08
930 FOR m=1 TO mx:d(m)="":NEXT m:NEXT xs	1540
940 IF f=1 THEN 980	0798

This is the most complex part of the program -the diagonals are searched for a hidden word

950 GOSUB 1060	05AD
960 IF ff=1 THEN PRINT CHR\$(7)w(a)" NOT found":GOTO 1000	18DC
970 ff=1:GOTO 280	076E

If a word has not been found, the letter order is reversed and the process repeated

980 IF ff=1 THEN GOSUB 1060	0B68
990 PRINT CHR\$(7)w(a)" found"	0B53
1000 NEXT a	03FC

Line 980 announces the good news when a word is found

1010 WIDTH LPRINT 255	09C7
1020 FOR y=1 TO ty:FOR x=1 TO tx:v=ASC(k(x,y))	15C6
1030 IF v>96 THEN LPRINT p;k(x,y)q;ELSE LPRINT k(x,y);	1BDC
1040 LPRINT " ";NEXT x:LPRINT:NEXT y:LPRINT	170C
1050 WIDTH LPRINT 62:END	0C34

The solution is printed out, complete with the highlighted words

1060 wr(a)="":FOR b=g TO 1 STEP-1	0DCF
1070 wr(a)=wr(a)+MID\$(w(a),b,1):NEXT b	10A9
1080 w(a)=wr(a):RETURN	0B30

The above lines make up a short routine for reversing the words

Faxcal.bas

These days, you no longer have to qualify for yuppiedom to be the possessor of a filofax. Its merits have been discovered by the population at large, and there seems to be very little that you cannot stuff into a filofax somewhere. The only minus point is the fact that filofax pages, despite being uniformly small, are inordinately expensive.

This does seem to be a sign of the times. The smaller your stereo – the more you pay for it. It seems as though space-saving has suddenly become a commodity in its own right.

Filofax fans everywhere will be pleased to hear that their PCW can keep up with this diminutive trend. This listing produces a calendar of a suitable

size for your filofax.

All you have to do to print out the calendar is run the program, enter the year you would like printed out, and wait. The program does the rest. If you are actually printing onto filofax paper, rather than cutting ordinary paper down to size, then the paper should be positioned carefully. The actual printing takes place between the the numbers 7 and 39 on the bail bar.

The program works by producing characters in pitch 7 (pitch, by the way, refers to the number of characters per inch) and halving the Line Spacing. Since it is physically impossible to persuade a daisywheel character to reduce in size, this is definitely not a program

for 9512 owners.

For those of you who are experienced programmers, this listing could provide the basis for a whole range of home-grown filofax pages. Welcome to yuppiedom, PCW style!

1991 C A L E N D A R															
JANUARY								FEBRUARY							
SUN		6	13	20	27	SUN	3	10	17	24					
MON	7		14	21	28	MON	4	11	18	25					
TUE	1	8	15	22	29	TUE	5	12	19	26					
WED	2	9	16	23	30	WED	6	13	20	27					
THU	3	10	17	24	31	THU	7	14	21	28					
FRI	4	11	18	25		FRI	1	8	15	22					
SAT	5	12	19	26		SAT	2	9	16	23					

A life-size printout of the first two months of 1991

```
10 e$=CHR$(27)                                0478
20 LPRINT e$+CHR$(15)+e$+"S"+CHR$(0)+e$+"I"    0090
```

The printer codes to set the pitch size and the line spacing are defined here

```
30 WIDTH LPRINT 200                            09CA
40 DIM m$(12);DIM m(12);DIM b(12)              0B82
50 INPUT "Calendar year required ? ",Y         13E9
60 L=Y-3+INT((Y+3)/4);e=-(1-7*INT(1/7))       0E80
70 FOR C=1 TO 12:IF C<8 THEN READ D$(C)        0FE8
80 READ M$(C);READ M(C);IF INT(Y/4)=Y/4 THEN M(2)=1 14B5
90 E=E-M(C-1);B(C)=E+(7 AND E<-5);e=b(c);NEXT 125D
```

The above code works out what day of the week New Year falls on

```
100 LPRINT TAB(28);Y;"C A L E N D A R":N=1    1071
110 FOR C=1 TO 6                               069A
120 LPRINT TAB(18);M$(N);TAB(51);M$(N+1);LPRINT 13D1
130 FOR W=1 TO 7:P=1;X=0;A=13;T=17;FOR H=1 TO 2 14E7
140 D=B(N+X)+(W-1);LPRINT TAB(A);D$(W);       0F81
150 FOR P=1 TO 6:IF D<1 OR D>28+M(N+X) THEN 170 12D6
160 LPRINT TAB(T);D;                          0946
170 T=T+4;D=D+7;NEXT X;X=1;A=40;T=43         1011
180 NEXT;LPRINT;NEXT;LPRINT:N=N+2;NEXT       1681
```

The actual calendar is printed here : using New Year's day as the initial guide

```
190 DATA SUN,JANUARY,3,MON,FEBRUARY,0,TUE,MARCH,3,WED 1AA9
200 DATA APRIL,2,THU,MAY,3,FRI,JUNE,2,SAT,JULY,3,AUGUST,3 1CEA
210 DATA SEPTEMBER,2,OCTOBER,3,NOVEMBER,2,DECEMBER,3 1B54
```

The names of all the days and months are stored in the last three lines

How to type in a listing

The first question that springs to mind when encountering a BASIC program for the very first time is, what on earth is it? Funnily enough, if you tried to type it directly into your PCW after the A> prompt, CP/M would respond in exactly the same way. What you need to do is load a special program, called an interpreter, which translates the BASIC listing into actions performed by the PCW.

This is achieved by booting up from your CP/M disc, and typing BASIC. The ok prompt

should appear. The first step is to type the program in: ignoring the figures on the right hand side. These are for checking purposes only (see Check3.bas, our December Listings program).

The program must be copied letter for letter. Beware of confusing the capital letter O, with the digit zero, and the capital letter I, with the digit one. If you spot a mistake, then correct it using the cursor keys and the delete key.

Once the program is finished, typing in LIST will bring it up on the screen – press f5 to stop it

scrolling. To correct any lines at this stage, you will need to type in EDIT then the line number and correct as before.

To test out your program, type in RUN. If there are still errors, you will get an error message. They can be corrected in the same way. To keep your industrious efforts on a disc, type SAVE "filename [RETURN]" using, of course, an appropriate filename. To reload a program you will need to load BASIC as before, and type in LOAD "filename."

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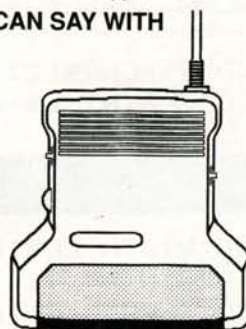
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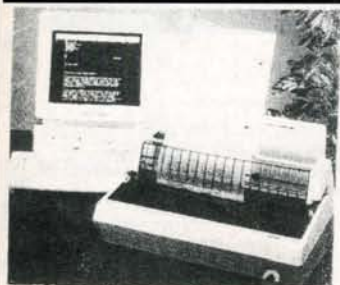
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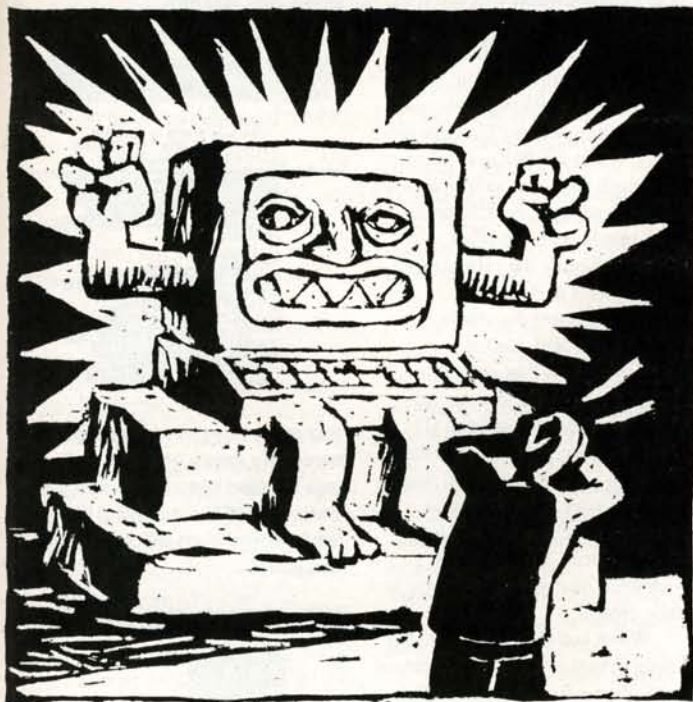
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LANGFORD

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Hack's Quest

Welcome to *Hack's Quest*, the interactive game that makes the *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* adventure look like a Conservative Party conference, and *Nightmare on Elm Street 27* look like a repeat.

In what can only be described as a sizzling intellectual challenge, you play a freelance writer with an article to deliver. The editor has just moved your deadline two weeks forward because of one of those unforeseen cataclysms that strike every now and again called the New Year. It is a bleak Monday. To make matters worse, you have a hangover.

Type your commands at the > prompt. (Enter HELP to ask for assistance.)

You find yourself in a hallway whose indescribable sordidness

immediately hits you. A shabbily-carpeted stairway leads up to your workroom.

Kindly remember you are a freelance writer. In other words: you're on your own, sunshine.

Stop kidding around. You have no idea which way is north.

That's better.... You are in a grimy workroom, whose stale, dead air is thick with the sweat of old deadlines. Bills lie in scattered profusion over the few square feet of available floor. Like an altar-idol dominating the foul temple of some obscene cult, the PCW broods over the shambles.

You turn savagely on the computer, but it is totally unmoved by your threatening attitude.

You can't do that.

In your eagerness to rush to the pub last night, you forgot to switch

the machine off. It now seems very warm indeed. An electricity bill lies uppermost in the heap of rubbish at your feet.

I see no disc.

An hour passes. Eventually you find the errant disc lurking beneath some rejection slips in the far corner of the room.

Are you sure?

By first cleaning off about an ounce of revolting tangled hairs and dust-bunnies glued by static to the disc, you have avoided the immediately debilitating and, ultimately, catastrophic failure of your drive. (Score 1 point.)

A blank screen confronts you!

You have absolutely no inspiration.

Where do you want to look?

There is a book here. There are bills and rejection slips here. There are old copies of *8000 Plus* here. There is a bottle here labelled "Inspiration: Matured 10 Years in Oak Casks at Glengrotty", but it is completely empty. You remember that this is why you have a hangover.

The book is *Roget's Thesaurus*. You study it for inspiration and find excitement, possession, afflatus, exhilaration, intoxication, headiness, encouragement, animation, incitement, provocation, irritation....

As usual, the irritating truth is that there's no inspiration to be had from Roget. But one just keeps hoping.

They are full of good stuff. The thought crosses your mind whether you could steal something from older ones which everyone must surely have forgotten by now.

Unfortunately your rigid moral code prevents you from actually doing this.

But as you stare blankly into space, the shadow of a notion slowly begins to take shape in your mind.... The doorbell rings!

It might be someone with a cheque, or even Steven Spielberg's office-boy asking after movie rights to your recent series of articles on How To Write Assembler Real Good.

You find yourself back in the sordid hallway. It was the postman. Why did he ring? Peering blearily at the mat, you find a card saying: "You failed to answer the door within the prescribed 0.5 nanoseconds, and three valuable-looking parcels have therefore been rushed back to our depot two hours' walk away."

The rest of the mail is all brown envelopes with sinister windows in them.

You are in the grimy workroom. Your train of thought, such as it was, has been completely derailed and lies upside down next to the tracks.

As you continue to stare blankly into space, the shadow of a notion

begins.... The telephone rings!

Are you kidding? You deliberately chose one whose tone rattles the windows of houses across the street, to make sure you never miss an important call from your publishers. Or Steven Spielberg, of course.

A hollow voice says: "Good morning! Have you thought how much you could enhance the value of your crummy home by ripping out the windows and installing expensive double glazing, covering up the original Victorian brickwork with synthetic cladding in a lurid shade of pink, and replacing that out-of-date slate roof with fibreglass simulated thatch?"

Ok.

As you stare blankly....

...you are inspired with a sudden, blazing need for coffee! Coffee. A beverage made by brewing the roasted and ground seeds or beans of a tropical evergreen shrub 8 to 10 metres high belonging to the genus *Coffea*, of the Rubiaceae, or madder family. Or in your case, instant from the Co-op.

You have wasted valuable time catering to your selfish wish for coffee. It is only two hours to the last postal collection! The article must be finished and printed out by then!

We have already been into this. Remember, you pay Class 4 National Insurance contributions, which bring you absolutely no benefits but are purely and simply an extra tax levied on you for your temerity in being a self-employed person. You are, in other words, the scum of the earth. You expect help?

You have discovered the magic word! (Score 1 point.) Here is a hint. To solve this puzzle you must find and read something you have not yet studied.

The small print says that it contained known carcinogen E6234, permissible colouring, fusel oil and monosodium glutamate.

There is a message on the keyboard! It begins: "TAB QWERTYUIOP".

The first envelope contains a bank statement. It is horrifying! Your overdraft exceeds the poll tax deficit of many small boroughs. Staring at it in terror, you feel all your moral inhibitions dissolving. (Score 1 point.)

Ok. You have now shed your scruples and demonstrated the qualities required to survive in 1991 Britain. (Score 2 points.) You have completed Level 1 of Hack's Quest.

Your score was 5 points. You have graduated from No-Hoper and now qualify as a Grubby Hack. In Level 2 you will confront the thrill-packed challenges of the Plagiarism Suit, the Cirrhosis Clinic and Writing A Novel.

Continue now?

You can't do that.

TIPOFFS

Ring in the new with Tipoffs!

Can't get LocoScript right? Think BASIC has nothing left to offer? Don't know in CP/M? Prime Ministers come and go, but whatever your politics, vote for Tipoffs, the pages liberally sprinkled with labour-saving tips. Even a conservative estimate says it will save you time and money. Democratically elected winner of the Major £30 prize this month is John Barton of Finchley, who tells you how to whip LocoFile into action for printing multi-column text good enough to grace any white paper.

If you can nominate a candidate for Prime Tip, don't just sit in the house – make it common knowledge! Write to us at Tipoffs, 8000 Plus, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2XF. It's Freepost.

Everywhere in CHAINS

In November's Tipoffs you mentioned the CHAIN command, which can link two BASIC files together if their total length would be greater than 30K or so – the normal limit BASIC listings can take up.

This is fine for programs which run in a linear fashion. However, for modular applications such as those involving JETSAM – where individual modules use a

number of shared subroutines which need to stay in memory at all times – the CHAIN MERGE command must be used. The separate modules can be separate programs and chain-merged into the main program, which stores the subroutines and say a menu routine. Mallard's CHAIN MERGE command lets you DELETE a program area before loading a new program which can avoid memory overloading problems.

Hugh Stephens, Newtown, Powys

Good form

If you are using LocoScript to position text precisely on a form, work in half line spacing and line pitch 8 (set respectively with [+]
LS 1/2 [ENTER] and [+]
LP 8 [ENTER]). Then each line down is

equivalent to 1/16 inch on the paper. The top inch of the paper is not printed on, and LocoScript usually sets a header zone of 3 (you can alter it to whatever you like) so the first line on screen will print out at 1 1/4 inches down the page.

Peter Beale, Bulford, Salisbury

Answer at last

I want to transfer some AtLast Plus database names and addresses into LocoScript. Do I need LocoMail?

Ken England, Falmouth, Cornwall

8000 Plus: No you don't! Here's what to do. In CP/M, before running AtLast, insert side 3 of the CP/M discs (or just your CP/M disc on a PCW9512) and at the A> type **PUT PRINTER OUTPUT TO FILE M:TEMP [RETURN]** then run AtLast as usual. You can choose any file name apart from M:TEMP of course. Print out the names and addresses you want to transfer as you normally would.

Nothing now appears to print; it's actually being intercepted and

put into a file M:TEMP. When you finish, quit back to CP/M and use **PIP to copy M:TEMP onto a disc (insert your CP/M disc, type PIP [RETURN], at the asterisk insert a disc and type A:=M:TEMP [RETURN]).**

(To make the printer output be put on the printer again in CP/M, by the way, you can type **PUT PRINTER OUTPUT TO PRINTER [RETURN]** though the diverting of printer output to M:TEMP stops when you switch off).

Then run up LocoScript as usual and create a new blank document on the disc with TEMP. In it press [f1] for 'Insert text' ([f7] if you have LocoScript 1) and move the cursor over TEMP then [ENTER]. The text that would have gone to the printer is inserted in the LocoScript document.

Column and file

Producing text in columns on the page is very useful for newsletters and similar. It's not possible directly in LocoScript, but owners of LocoFile owners can use it to produce text in columns very smartly and easily. The basic procedure is to write your document as one long thin column, making editing changes as usual. When it's finished, you copy each page across into a specially set up LocoFile document that is set up to print columns. Here's the process for two columns in detail.

First create a document that will hold the text. Call it COLUMNS.TXT or something. In it press [f2] and 'change layout'. Using the cursors and [f1] set the left margin at 10 and the right at 44 making the total width 34. Type your text, editing as usual. Don't use tabs; use three spaces instead. Don't bother with pitch changes or bold or italic effects.

When you are sure the text is finished, make sure the last line on each page is line 54 or less. The put each page into a block. Do this by going to the top of the document, pressing [COPY] [PAGE] [COPY] 1; then [PAGE] [COPY] [PAGE] [COPY] 2; then [PAGE] [COPY] [PAGE] [COPY] 3; and so on. Save and exit.

Now in the disc manager press [f1] 'Create LocoFile data' and give the name as COLUMNS.2 or something. Press [f5] to change the card to width 80, height 60, and left margin 6. Now create three items using [f3]:

Name	Width	Height	Col.	Line
Heading	70	1	5	3
Column 1	35	54	1	5
Column 2	35	54	45	5

Note that the width of the text boxes is 35 – one more than the width of the text document you've created. [EXIT]; you go into the first record. Enter the heading area and type a heading, using spaces to centre it. Now move into the left hand box, column 1, and [PASTE] 1; when it's eventually pasted in the first page into there, move into the right hand box, column 2, and press [PASTE] 2. You should get the text exactly fitting in each box.

To make a new page, press [f1] and create a new record. Paste in the other blocks similarly.

To move to the top of the page at any time, the quickest way is to press [f3] and select 'Heading'.

When the pages have been

pasted in, press [f4] and print. You can select pages or print the lot, in high or draft quality. Perfect two column print!

You can extend the idea to three or more columns with any setup of headings, footnotes, 'text boxes' etc. you like.

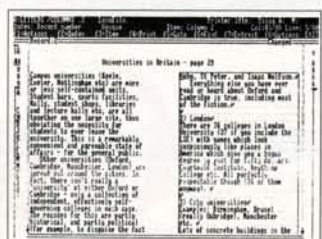
John Barton, Finchley, London



Your text is typed into a normal document with a narrow width and each page is copied into a block...then you create a LocoFile document of the required dimensions with heading and 'text boxes'...



...then you create a LocoFile document of the required dimensions with heading and 'text boxes'...



...then just paste in your blocks to the text boxes...



...and print out. Perfect aligned columns, and you can extend the idea to any number of columns or text boxes anywhere on the page.

Transfer fee

How can I transfer text files, BASIC programs and associated data files between my three machines – a CPC 6128, a PCW 8256/8512 and a PC 2086? None of the programs uses sound, graphics, user functions or memory POKEing or PEEKing which, of course, would not work the same way on the three machines. They are text-only.

A Brown, Strathclyde, Scotland

8000 Plus: Transfer between the CPC and PCW is a matter of finding a CPC with a three-inch disc drive. Then you can just save the CPC BASIC programs onto disc and use the same disc in the PCW – and vice versa. You must save them as ASCII, though, which on the PCW in Mallard BASIC is done with the command SAVE "A:PROGRAM.BAS" A [RETURN] or whatever other name you want to give it. Text files from word processors common to both machines – Protext and Tasword for example – can be interchanged similarly. LocoScript files can be used on a CPC but only if they are made into ASCII files first (see the manual).



Text transfer between the CPC6128 (above left) and the PC (above right) may be easier than you think. On the other hand, it may not

Transferring files between a PC and PCW is more involved. The two must be connected via a cable and RS232 interface on the PCW. You can get this stuff from your local computer dealer or by mail order from 8000 Plus. LocoLink is special software that will let you transfer files between LocoScript on the PCW and LocoScript on the PC; it is advertised in 8000 Plus. If you are just transferring BASIC programs saved in ASCII (or text-only BASIC programs working under Mallard BASIC on both machines), simple text files, or files from other word processing programs common to both machines (Protext, Tasword etc) this is what to do. Suppose the file to be transferred is BORING.DOC.

On the PCW switch on and run up CP/M making sure the computers are connected to each



other. When the A> appears type SETSIO 1200 H OFF [RETURN] and on the PC load MS-DOS and type MODE COM1:1200,,8 [RETURN]

PC to PCW: On the PCW type PIP [RETURN]. When the asterisk appears insert the disc to take the file. Now type A:BORING.DOC = AUX:[E] [RETURN]. On the PC type COPY BORING.DOC AUX/A [RETURN].

PCW to PC: On the PC type COPY BORING.DOC [RETURN]. On the PCW type PIP [RETURN] and when the asterisk comes up replace the CP/M disc with the disc that holds the file to be transferred. Type AUX:=BORING.DOC[E] [RETURN]. If the PC doesn't appear to think that the transfer has finished, type AUX:=EOF:[RETURN] and that should finish things off.

From A to B

I want to copy some files from a disc in the A drive of my 8256 to a disc in the 3 1/2" B drive which I have had fitted. How can I do this? DISCKIT won't copy discs this way.

Jeff Palmer, Durham

8000 Plus: Switch on the PCW and insert a copy of the CP/M master disc side 1. When the A> appears type PIP [RETURN]. When the asterisk appears insert the source disc in drive A and the destination disc in drive B and type B:=A:*. *[RETURN]. When the asterisk reappears press [RETURN] to return to the A> prompt. Check the files have been transferred by typing DIR B: [RETURN].

Bigger discs

If you format a disc in the A drive of an 8256 or 8512 using DFORM instead of DFORM the disc works as normal but you get 178k of space available instead of 173k.

Basil Pigg, Bath, Avon

Count on this

It's annoying not having a word counter in LocoScript. However, you can gauge quickly how many words your document contains knowing number of pages it has, and using following table.

It assumes that in 10 pitch your margins are set at 10 and 72 (the PCW 9512 has this set up already) while in 12 pitch they are at 10 and 85 (the PCW 8256 and 8512 have this set up already). If you work in proportional spacing it assumes the margins are again at 10 and 85.

Paper is assumed to be A4

single sheet or 11 inch continuous paper, each of which gives 54 lines per page with LocoScript's usual set up. The text used for these trials was average complexity novel/non-fiction prose, with no blank lines between paragraphs, and each paragraph beginning indented five characters. The figures are average over 20 pages.

Typical word counts per page

	Pitch 10 (9512)	Pitch 12 (8256/8512)	Pitch PS
Line spacing 1	550	640	670
Line spacing 1 1/2	360	420	440
Line spacing 2	270	320	330

Mike Smith, London SE9

Quick transfer

When working with two files at once in Protext you can easily move a large chunk of text from one to the other. Press [ALT] Y to move across to the other, mark out a block, [ALT] Y to move back to the original, and [ALT] O to insert that block in the current document.

However, it can be slow for large blocks. It's quicker as follows. Mark the block out but then [STOP] and in command

mode type SAVEB [RETURN] M:X [RETURN] – you save the marked block as the file M:X.

Now you can clear the file if you don't need to take any more text from it. Type SW to go over to the other document, move to the appropriate point and in command mode type MER [RETURN] M:X [RETURN].

The text is inserted for you. It's all much quicker than using [ALT] O.

**John Blenkinsop
Hemel Hempstead, Herts**

Publishing PCW

I am writing a 50 page booklet. Is it possible to send it to a publisher or printer on disc so they can typeset it straight from there instead of having it retyped?

**Stuart Nisbet, Clarkston,
Glasgow**

8000 Plus: Publishers, magazine editors (even ones with PCWs), literary agents or whoever you send your work to will always, always want a printout to read. Use high quality and A4 paper with double line spacing; if you use continuous paper, split it into individual sheets – stuff that looks like a toilet roll tends to get treated as such!

Before you send a disc, phone to check. Some magazines, publishers etc. will welcome three inch discs; most will not. A few printers in your Yellow Pages can typeset your material straight from three inch disc; again, you'll

have to check by phone beforehand. If they do accept three inch discs, for heaven's sake supply ASCII versions of any text files as well as LocoScript or Protext – consult your manual if you don't know how to do this.

Most publishers, printers etc. like stuff on disc but can only cope with either Apple Macintosh or PC discs in 3 1/2 or 5 1/4 inch sizes. See the tips given in these pages for transferring stuff to a PC.

You may read of people sending text to their publishers or magazine editors over the phone, by modem. In real life this never works and I wouldn't advise anyone to try it – least of all publishers and magazine editors.

The depressing upshot of all this is that, despite this age of technology when everyone has a computer somewhere, you'll probably end up having your manuscript typed up all over again somewhere along the line.

On the move

Transporting three inch discs abroad can often mean red faces at the customs office. Wrapping them

in polythene and putting them in a card index box keeps them well protected, and easy to locate if you set the alarm off at immigration.

**Baron E. Shradley
Tetbury.**

Last words

I've just bought a PCW. How long can I expect it to last? Is there anything I should do to keep it in good condition? How long will my discs last?

M Dunn, Watford, Herts

8000 Plus: Well, I've been using mine virtually every day for five years solid and the keyboard, monitor and printer are just as good as when I got them. There isn't much you have to do to keep your PCW in trim – it's built like a tank – but the following points are worth keeping in mind:

1. The keyboard is the first thing to go with hamfisted typists – I've seen them totally wrecked in three months. Learn to touch type like me, he says smugly. Imagine you're playing a Chopin piano nocturne, and not the percussion parts in Beethoven's Ninth.
2. A greasy keyboard will still work but is unpleasant to use. However clean you keep your hands, at night little bogeymen will come out of the monitor and spread a jammy grey substance all over the keytops. Clean it off by unplugging the keyboard and giving it a careful once-over with



The best way to make your PCW last a long time is probably learning to touch type, which can make your keyboard last years instead of months

a J cloth and multi-surface cleaner.

3. Dust the monitor frequently (at least weekly). If the dust gets in the drives and then onto your discs it can damage them, losing your data. Normally discs last a couple of years, but can go at any time between a week and ten years. Copy and then reformat them every few months and keep backups!

4. Don't switch it on and off repeatedly – switch it on in the morning and off in the evening if you're using it throughout the day.

See you anon

I have named a disc in LocoScript 2 as usual using [f2] in the disc manager (or f5) in LocoScript 1). Now I want to get rid of the name. How is it done?

Russell Safford, Kettering, Northants

8000 Plus: Switch on the PCW and insert your CP/M copy disc. At the A>, type PIP [RETURN]. At the asterisk, type M:=A:SET.COM [RETURN]. If

you get an error message, you didn't have SET.COM on the disc; replace the disc in the drive with your CP/M master disc and try again.

When the asterisk reappears, press [RETURN] to get the A> back again and replace the disc in the drive with the LocoScript disc to be unnamed. Now type M:SET A:[NAME= [RETURN] – yes, that's equals sign then [RETURN], with no right hand square bracket.

Now run up LocoScript as usual. The disc is now unnamed.

Gap in understanding

Users of the Star LC 24-10 in CP/M may have had trouble with 4 1/2 inch gaps appearing on continuous paper. It's not a bug but is down to an oddity in the way the Star works.

Unlike most printers it 'knows' whether or not continuous paper is used by checking if the tractor feed is engaged. This means that the printer doesn't need to implement the [EXIT] c code – 27 99 in decimal – that signals continuous paper. What it will

recognise is the 27 99 n code, where n is the number of lines as a top gap. If you send a string of printer initialisation codes that includes a 27 99, it will look for an n to tell it what the top gap is, and take the number it finds next – as likely as not, this will be 27, giving you a top gap of 27 lines or 4 1/2 inches.

Here's an example of how to get round it in one 'guilty' package, Money Manager Plus. Take the 'special printer option' and edit the 27 99 from the list of printer codes and everything should print out fine.

Graeme Aldous, Moorsholm, Yorkshire

Page boy

The 'print pages' command of ProteXt is very useful but can be tedious. For example, if you want to print just pages 136-138 and 264 of a 500-page document (perhaps they got screwed up in the printer) then you have to type PP or PPQ or whatever, then press any key except space 135 times, then three spaces, then any other another 125 times, then space, then [STOP]. Is there an easier way?

M Morris, Newcastle

8000 Plus: An easier way is to put appropriate printing commands in the document at suitable places such as >SA 136 and >EA 138 for example which will cause just page 136 to be printed if you put these two stored commands at the top of the document. This however only lets you print one range of pages, not more than that.

You can try an execute file. Suppose in this example you make up a file called SCREWED.UP

consisting of the lines:

```
PS
x
x
x (...135 xs in all!)
x
x (space)
x (space)
x (space)
x
x
x (125 more xs!)
x
x (space)
/252/
```

You could then load the file to print, type the command X SCREWED.UP [RETURN] and go for a cup of tea while the things you'd normally type at the keyboard are typed in for you, printing out just the right pages. That letter x can be anything else of course. You can check on how many you've typed by pressing [ALT] P which displays the total line count at the top – take off one (for the PS) and that shows you which page you're printing with this character.

Cursors foiled

When working on a BASIC program which alters certain things – changes the screen to a small window, turns the cursor off, reverses the screen colour etc. – it can be frustrating if the program fails somewhere and dumps you out with these settings still selected.

A way round is to have the last lines of the program as the ones which reset the screen to normality – if you want to end the program before them, you can have an END line. For example:

```
1000 PRINT e$+"e"
1010 PRINT e$+"y"
1020 PRINT e$+"q"
```

which switches the cursor back on (1000), makes the screen take up its normal size again (1010) and selects normal colouring (1020).

Now, if your program dumps you out halfway through, just type GOTO 1000 [RETURN] and the resetting is done. If you want to end the program before you get to line 1000, a line such as 830 END does that – the resetting lines never get to work, but are always available using GOTO 1000.

Rob Marshall, Ventnor, IOW

Question time

Can you answer the following questions:

1. Is there a way of connecting a tape deck to a 9512?
2. Can I use CPC programmes saved on three-inch disc on my 9512?
3. Can I load LocoScript from CP/M?
4. Can I edit the .EMS file so that it will display a different message on starting up?

David Molson, Bishop's Stortford, Herts

8000 Plus: 1. No.
2. No. The only exception is very simple BASIC listings, which if saved as ASCII may run on both machines from the same disc. You

Tcan't expect any screen positioning commands, graphics functions, or 'clever' PEEKing and POKEing and USER functions to do anything sensible.

3. No, not really; Flipper from Imperative Software (advertised in 8000 Plus) lets you keep CP/M and LocoScript running simultaneously, so you can switch across from one to the other, but it does this by temporarily splitting the PCW's memory in half; you can't access the CP/M from LocoScript or vice versa.

4. Yes, using SID.COM, but it's an involved process and far more trouble than it's worth. If there's demand we can go into the use of SID generally in a feature and tell you how to personalise any text messages you get in LocoScript and CP/M to any degree you wish.

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[illegible]

Spell binding

Often in LocoScript 2 you want to make a document which contains many lines, each with one or two short words, into columns. Here's a quick way.

In the document press [f2] for "Change layout". Set the margins at 4 and 86 using the cursors and [f1]. Move to column 5 and press [+]; then to 30 and press [+] three times; move to 55 and press [+] three times again; finally move to 85 and press [+] twice. [EXIT] to the main document. You can have as many columns as you like following a similar procedure. This set-up puts a left tab at 5, a right tab at 85, and centre tabs everywhere else. Experiment to find the best set up.

Go to the top of the document

```
aardvarke
budgiee
cate
dogg
elephante
froge
hawke
indrie
jackale
kangarooe
lione
monkeye
narwhale
orang-utane
pige
quite big doge
rabbite
skunke
```

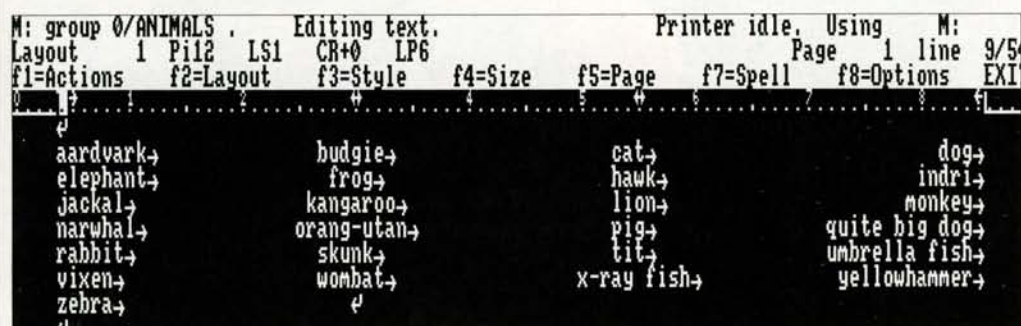
A document like this can be made easier to read and more economical on space...

and press [EXCH]. Give [RETURN] as the text to search for and [TAB] as the text to replace

it with. Select 'automatic exchange to end of document'. The words are put into neat columns all ready to inspect on screen or printout.

Owners of LocoSpell and recent versions of LocoScript (2.28 or later) can insert user dictionaries into documents and use the above procedure to check their contents more easily, by having the words in columns. Create a new document DICT.1 or something. Set up the layout as above. Now press [f1] and 'Insert text'. In the disc manager, put the cursor over the user dictionary to check or other document to put into columns and [ENTER]. The words come in, one to a line. When they are inserted, exchange [RETURN]s for [TAB]s as above.

Paul Hornshaw, St Helens, Merseyside



...by putting it into columns. Note the position and type of tabs, and what's happened to the order of the words; you couldn't use this method to put text into columns.

Key facts

In November's Tipoffs you gave a short routine for testing for keypresses. The following routine:

```
10 PRINT "Press a key"
20 a$=input$(1)
30 IF a$=chr$(19) THEN 50
40 GOTO 10
50 PRINT "You pressed [f5]"
should ask for keypresses repeatedly until the user presses [f5]. Similar routines work for [f1] (with CHR$(26) instead of CHR$(19)) and [f3] (CHR$(17) and [f7] (CHR$(16)) - but not [f5]. Why not? And how can I make it work?
```

R Bell, Stevenage, Herts

8000 Plus: Usually [f5] in a BASIC program pauses whatever you're doing and [f3] or [f5] again resumes it (and is thus a good way of looking at a long listing midstream without using [STOP]). If you want it to return 26 instead of pausing, include the line

1 OPTION RUN

at the beginning of the listing. Then your routine will work as expected.

This also incidentally makes [STOP] return 13 instead of its usual function, and is thus a way of stopping STOPping stopping - if you see what I mean.

Questions, questions

[P]lease answer all of my questions.

1. How can you draw in BASIC?
2. Can you load a CP/M program from BASIC?
3. How can you save a string in BASIC?
4. Why do Amsoft discs cost more than Maxell's?
5. Can you print a question in CP/M?
6. Is LocoScript 1 or 2 compatible with Stop Press?
7. Is there a book that has just BASIC programs?
8. How do you use SuperCalc's SDI facility?
9. Can you enlarge and shrink a picture in Micro Design?
10. Can you convert an area from Micro Design to Stop Press?
11. Is SuperCalc compatible with Micro Design or Stop Press?
12. Can you get a directory of all the groups/users at the same time in CP/M?
13. Is there a way of making sounds other than a bleep in BASIC?

Tom Picking, Somewhere in England

8000 Plus: OK, here goes:

1. You can't. Buy Lightning BASIC from CP Software or get a drawing program. You may read about 'GSX', the so-called 'graphics extension' to BASIC; forget it.
2. No.
3. If you mean save to disc, what you do is save it as a short file. Here's an example which saves the phrase 'This is a short text file' as the file SHORT.DOC:
10 OPEN "O", 1, "A:SHORT.DOC"
20 PRINT 8000 Plus: 1, "This is a short text file."
30 CLOSE
4. Because, all things being equal, discs would be the same price, but all things are not equal.
5. I'm not sure what you mean. Pressing [ALT] P echoes everything you type subsequently to the printer, and [ALT] P again stops the echoing.
6. Yes.
7. Not that I know of, though there are some nice ones in the 8000 Plus Tips Collection, plus disc, available through the Special Offers pages.
8. Consult the manual; it's too complicated to cover here.
9. No. Clip art cannot be resized.

10. No. Clip art can be imported from Stop Press though.

11. Well, you can import a simple .PRN file from SuperCalc; take off the borders with /Global.Border; use the /Output command and write the spreadsheet to disc which will automatically give a .PRN file.

12. Yes. Copy DIR.COM from side 3 of the CP/M discs into the memory using PIP. Then the command M:DIR [user=all] [RETURN] does just that.

13. Yes. The following routine, incorporated into the BASIC programs you write, gives you an alternative to the beep. Include the lines at the start of your program. Then, any time in the program where you want a quiet sound, just issue the command CALL buzz (a,b) (as in line 1000) and you get a nice discreet blip. You can still use PRINT CHR\$(7) to make a beep if you want.
10 MEMORY &HCB00-1
20 address=&HCB00 : ln=120
30 FOR i=1 TO 12
40 sum=0: READ code\$,check\$
50 FOR j=1 TO 21 STEP 2
60
byte=VAL("&H"+MID\$(code\$,j,2))
70 POKE address,byte
80 sum=sum+byte:

```
address=address+1
90 NEXT
100 ln=ln+10 : IF
sumVAL("&H"+check$) THEN
PRINT "Error: check data in
line"; ln : END
110 NEXT
120 buzz=&HCB00
130 DATA
e5d5c5dde54e2346eb5e23,664
140 DATA
566960cd1bcb3e0cd3f8dd,5c4
150 DATA
e1c1d1e1c9f37dcb3dcb3d,79d
160 DATA
2fe6034f0600dd2130cbdd,443
170 DATA
093e0b000000040c0d20fd,18c
180 DATA
0e3f0520f83cfe0d20023d,310
190 DATA
3dd3f8444ffe0b20097ab3,4fa
200 DATA
2809794d1bdde94d0cdd9,4f7
210 DATA
fbc90d0a43423432206d6f,3c2
220 DATA
64756c610943423533206c,328
230 DATA
7032094342353720657869,302
240 DATA
74091ac974091a00000000,1f7
250 a%=2000:b%=10
1000 CALL buzz(a%,b%)
```


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THE GOOD Software FILE

These pages provide a comprehensive guide to the Amstrad PCW software. Published in three monthly parts, this time it's the turn of Word Processors (including Desk Top Publishers), Accounts/Payroll packages and Utilities. We've set out to cover every important piece of software we could lay our hands on, and to give you enough information to decide whether they are suitable for you.

All software will run on both the 9512 and the 8000 series machines, though the former's daisywheel printer cannot print graphical output.

The selection isn't comprehensive, but the software listed here represents what we think is the best of that currently available.

As well as a brief summary of what they do, the main Plus and Minus points for each program are listed – Pluses have a ▲ by them, Minuses a ▼. Those we think are particularly noteworthy have a corner flash.

Have fun window shopping!

SPREADSHEETS

If a database replaces an address book, then a spreadsheet replaces the back of an old envelope. It is really an electronic piece of paper which allows you to jot down numbers, juggle them around and analyse the cost benefits of a situation. Vital for businesses, spreadsheets can be useful to home users too: if you want a bank loan you will find that showing your bank manager a spreadsheet printout of your living expenses answers a lot of questions!

A typical spreadsheet has a grid of rows and columns. This grid forms a screenful of cells identified by their column and row numbers, e.g. A3, K36 etc. Each cell can contain a simple number, some text to make the page easier to read, or a formula telling the spreadsheet to work out a number using values from elsewhere. The power of spreadsheets is in this last category, formulae. You can make a cell's value depend on the value of cells above it, or to the left of it, and this value is then automatically updated if changes are made to the other cells.

So how do you choose between the various spreadsheets? One difference is sheet size, i.e. the number of cells you are allowed to work with. You'll need a few hundred for home use, and 1000 or more for business use. Another area is the range of formulae that you can use – all spreadsheets allow simple column and row totalling, but with some you can get complex statistical analyses too. As with all software, think very carefully what you will need before choosing.

MINI OFFICE PROFESSIONAL

£49.95 • Database Software • 0625 859444

Mini Office is a suite of five integrated programs – database, word processor, graphics module, comms package, and a very good spreadsheet. Broadly similar to SuperCalc in operation with usual features of auto or manual recalculation, replicating of rows/columns, powerful range of arithmetic functions etc. Printout is a strong point – rows/columns can be put into italic/bold etc, and prints draft, NLQ or even sideways! Can't sort and can't just save data or structure of a spreadsheet, but maximum size of spreadsheet is claimed to be 320k. You can use the data from a spreadsheet in the graphics module directly. The manual is, however, pretty useless.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Good, full-featured easy to use spreadsheet
- ▲ Prints in draft, NLQ or even sideways
- ▲ Maximum size of spreadsheet 320k
- ▲ Can transfer data directly to graphics module
- ▲ Can drive 24-pin printouts
- ▼ 'Save' options not as versatile as SuperCalc

CRACKER TURBO

£49.00 • Paperback Software

0245 265017

A spreadsheet designed with advanced calculating power firmly in mind, including statistical functions. The screen layout is totally defined by the user, and cell value calculations can almost be full programs, e.g. DO ... WHILE. It might prove too complex if all you want is simple spreadsheet operations. The screen messages are very helpful though. Turbo is claimed to be faster than Cracker 2 though sometimes isn't noticeably so.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Can cope with very complex formulae
- ▲ Flexible screen format defined by the user
- ▲ On-screen prompts are very clear
- ▲ Graphs/charts can be automatically produced
- ▼ Documentation is large, but obscure and confusing
- ▼ You've got to do a lot of work just to get started
- ▼ Very complex for quick, simple applications
- ▼ Needs some programming skills to get the most out of it
- ▼ Free workspace is on the small side (17k) although memory is used efficiently

SUPERCALC 2

£69.95 • Amsoft/Sorcim

091 510 8787

The best selling spreadsheet, officially endorsed by Amstrad. SuperCalc 2 is broadly similar to ScratchPad Plus, but it has a smaller workspace and is less flexible about the allowed spreadsheet dimensions. You can store sequences of commands for repetitive calculations. Price includes VAT and p&p.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Excellent manual – sections for beginners and experts.
- ▲ Stores commands to run from files
- ▲ "Data Interchanger" allows you to transfer spreadsheet data to other applications
- ▲ Comprehensive range of calculation functions available
- ▲ Screen can be split into 2 windows
- ▼ Spreadsheet is limited by memory size
- ▼ No graphical output facilities

FIRST CALC

£29.95 • Minerva Systems

392 437756

Touted as a quick and simple to use program for the beginner, this is nevertheless quite a powerful spreadsheet, with a large capacity, ability to replicate formulae, export etc. Really it's not vastly more user-friendly than the rest but a good value package all the same.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ A lot of program for the money
- ▲ Good tutorials with demo files
- ▲ Simple to use but reasonably sophisticated
- ▼ Not much easier to use than more powerful packages
- ▼ Program is limited by the memory capacity of the PCW (300k)

GRAPHICS

– 400 filled cells)

You can use a graphics package to create and store diagrams and drawings on disc, to be amended, adjusted or printed out at will.

There are three main types of graphics package: art, technical drawing and graph plotting programs. In art packages the

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emphasis is on designs and pictures, with freehand drawing facilities, a selection of pretty text fonts and a variety of patterns to fill areas with. These are made much more effective and easier to use if you have a mouse.

Technical drawing packages concentrate on shapes, such as squares and polygons, lines and labels. Finally graph plotters will take your data and turn them into bar charts, pie charts and so on. 9512 owners will have to buy a dot matrix printer to do all this, of course.

MASTER PAINT

£19.95 • Database Software • 0625 878888

A WIMP environment graphics package (windows, icons, menus, and pointer) which will run with Kempston, AMX or Electric Studio mice. Usual facilities for drawing curved or straight lines, polygons, boxes, circles and ellipses, and a host of 'fill' patterns. 'Undo' function and eraser facility, plus the ability to zoom in on a part of the picture.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ WIMP environment makes it easy to use
- ▲ Zoom function lets you fine-tune your pictures
- ▲ Good range of effects
- ▲ Undo and erase facilities
- ▼ Text fonts are boring
- ▼ Can't move large blocks with the copy function

MASTERSCAN

£69.95 • Database Software

0625 878888

A device which clips on to your printer head and scans pictures, sending the digitised result to disc. You can then use the pictures in desktop publications or in other graphics packages, such as Master Paint. Very useful for newsletter production but the claims for Master Scan as a low-cost fax machine are grandiose – the quality of scanned text is poor if the text is anything less than headline size.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Simple method of getting good digitised graphics
- ▲ Suitable for all desktop publishing programs
- ▲ Contrast control useful
- ▼ Quality of scanned text is bad – no good for faxes
- ▼ Problems with illustrations containing lots of grey

LIGHTNING BASIC

£24.95 • CP Software

0993 823463

A very clever add-on to normal Basic which works on three levels. The first contains all the everyday commands, whilst the second and third levels are used for designing icons, characters and sprites. There is something in it for everyone, whether an experienced Basic programmer or a beginner.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Simple and easy to use
- ▲ Makes simple Basic programs look really professional
- ▲ Good fun to use
- ▼ Documentation can be unclear
- ▼ Printed output is coarse draft quality
- ▼ Can only cope with simple graphics

COMPLEMENT FONTS & BORDERS

£12.50 • Dragonfly Designs • N/A

Although it can be used with all the main DTP packages, this latest complement disc was designed to work alongside Stop Press. The 11 fonts supplied on the disc show consistent good design and artistic flair and are easily loaded.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ The fonts provide a very professional finish.
- ▲ It is possible to rotate and reverse elements.
- ▲ Very user-friendly.

- ▼ Setting up borders tends to be difficult and time-consuming.
- ▼ Printed output could be better (but it is still above average).

SIGNWRITER

£29.95 • Wight Scientific • 081 858 2699

Offers the widest range of features of any of the poster printing programs. Signwriter provides a range of 20 fonts, some of them very imaginative. Ideal for posters.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ You can redesign fonts and design your own symbols.
- ▲ A wide range of interesting fonts is available
- ▼ Not very user-friendly.
- ▼ Font design is slow.

STOP PRESS

£49.95 • AMS • 0625 878888

Though touted as a DTP program, Stop Press is an excellent graphics package. Can present data in the form of graphs, pie charts etc., and has the usual range of facilities to draw and fill triangles, boxes and so on plus a very good 'zoom' option which lets you examine the effect of changes in great detail.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Good graph drawing facilities
- ▲ Can design your own area fill patterns
- ▲ Good range of clip art, which you can modify if you wish
- ▲ Can superimpose one image on another
- ▲ Works with AMX and Kempston mice
- ▲ Is also a good DTP package
- ▼ Undoing wrongly placed text is difficult

AYE PLUS

£24.95 • CP Software • 0993 823463

The full title is 'All you ever wanted to know about graphics, the universe and everything on PCW 8256/8512 ... but were afraid to ask PLUS'. Phew. A wide range of little programs to do graphic things on the PCW like smooth scrolling, defining windows, moving sprites around. The programs are written in assembler, with the source code provided if you want to see how to program them for yourself and adapt the routines.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Wide range of useful functions
- ▲ Can be used from BASIC, machine code, or other language
- ▲ The assembler source code is supplied
- ▲ Inexpensive
- ▲ Good manual
- ▲ CP don't mind you using their routines in programs you sell
- ▼ A bit long-winded to use from BASIC
- ▼ No easy way of loading just the routines you want

PAGE MAGIC, DISC IMAGE KIT, DISC POSTER KIT

£13.50 each • HD Design • 04867 81394

Clip art collection with a difference. This suite of three ready-made design aids offers a wide range of additions to your text. Page Magic contains a series of sporting images and digitised male and female shots, together with a handy selection of frames and borders. Image Kit has a range of images, from Spitfires to Buddha, whilst Poster Kit offers an excellent collection of print styles, which reproduce with astounding clarity.

PLUSES

- ▲ Poster Kit contains ready made words such as 'Fete' and 'Sale'
- ▲ Excellent visual clarity

VIDI PCW

£79.99 • Rombo Productions • 0506 414631

A very similar package to the Electric Studio digitiser; not much to choose between the two. Rombo's works with the Fleet Street Editor, Electric Studio's with Newsdesk International.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Text can be inserted from within the program
- ▲ 16 levels of shading
- ▲ Can print images to screen in defined order and time apart.

- ▼ Unhelpful manual

MD CLEARTEXT

£13.50 • Exemplar Design • n/a

Designed for use in conjunction with MicroDesign, MD Cleartext allows you to create your own type styles to liven up your work. There is a range of non-English fonts on offer as well, including the accents in the French, German and Spanish languages. An excellent add-on to an excellent DTP program.

PLUSES

- ▲ Developed in conjunction with Creative Technology themselves, resulting in a comprehensive appreciation of ▲
- ▲ MicroDesign's workings.
- ▲ No jagged edges or loss of definition when large characters are printed out

GAMES

- ▲ Produced from a quality and highly reputed source

The choice of games for the PCW is far from extensive in comparison with what is on offer for other machines. However, the range is widening, and there is an increase in graphics-based games, replacing the text-only adventures which currently dominate the market for the PCW. Text-based games rely heavily on the use of parsers, which aid adventure navigation by word analysis. The ability of a parser, is, not surprisingly, responsible for the success or failure of a game. What follows is a selection of some of the best games currently available for the PCW, together with a marks out of five evaluation.

ACADEMY (TAU CETI II)

£14.95 • CRL • 081 533 2918 • 8000s only

The sequel to Tau Ceti. To qualify as an advanced skimmer pilot, you must complete successfully 20 missions. Blast enemy craft with your personally designed skimmer.

GRAPHICS	4/5	ADDICTIVENESS	5/5
LASTING APPEAL	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	5/5

AVON

£14.95 • Topologika • 0733 244682 • All PCWs

Based on the world and work of Shakespeare, this text-only adventure puts many a puzzler to even the most well-versed student of the bard. A handy help mode will get you out of the tighter corners. Compulsive gameplay!

Addictiveness	4/5 Atmosphere	4/5
Challenge	4/5 Value Verdict	4/5

BACKGAMMON

£12.95 • CP Software • 0993 823463 • All PCWs

A fairly good implementation of the gambling board-game. Playing speed is easily alterable and is totally unrelated to the games level of skill control.

RANGE OF FEATURES	4/5	STRENGTH OF PLAY	3/5
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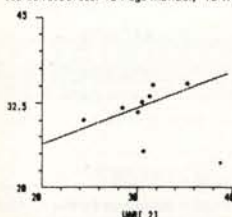
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GRAPHICS	4/5	DOCUMENTATION	3/5
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BLACKSTAR

£14.95 • CRL • 081 533 2918 • 8000s only

A traditional text adventure with large playing area. You explore Castle Blackstar in search of a power orb.

ATMOSPHERE	4/5	INTERACTION	2/5
CHALLENGE	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

BOUNDER

£13.95 • Gremlin • 0742 753423 • 8000s only

A graphics bouncing-ball game. You have to direct the ball over a treacherous network of squares & hexagons. Persevere – or use the cheat mode!

GRAPHICS	4/5	ADDICTIVENESS	3/5
LASTING APPEAL	3/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

BRIAN CLOUGH'S FORTUNES

£19.99 • CDS • 0302 321134 • All PCWs

A cross between Monopoly and Football Manager, combining board and PCW. Go for league and cup success – but keep the bank manager happy too!

GRAPHICS	2/5	ADDICTIVENESS	4/5
LASTING APPEAL	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

BRIDGE PLAYER GALACTICA 2150

£19.95 • CP Software • 0993 823463

All PCWs

The upgraded Bridge Player 2000. Excellent Tutor mode with hands written by Nichola Gardener of the London Bridge School. Retains strong play.

GRAPHICS	3/5	STRENGTH OF PLAY	4/5
LASTING APPEAL	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	3/5

CLASSIC GAMES

£19.95 • CP Software • 0993 823463

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A compilation of classic 'thinking' games on one disc: Clock Chess, Bridge Player, Backgammon and Draughts. Excellent value for money.

CLOCK CHESS 89

£19.95 • CP Software • 0993 823463

All PCWs

One of the better PCW chess programs. You can alter the level of play by specifying a time limit. Capable of very strong play and the 3D graphics are excellent.

GRAPHICS	4/5	STRENGTH OF PLAY	5/5
RANGE OF FEATURES	5/5	VALUE VERDICT	5/5

COLOSSUS CHESS 4.0

£19.99 • CDS Software • 0302 321134

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A very strong chess game which manages to use time which you spend thinking to plan its strategy. Bags of features, including blindfold games.

GRAPHICS	3/5	STRENGTH OF PLAY	3/5
LASTING APPEAL	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	3/5

CORRUPTION

£24.95 • Rainbird • 0666 504 326 • All PCWs

Takes you into the heady world of stocks and shares where making money is what it's all about. There's something rotten in the state of Scott Electronics and it's up to you to find out what.

ATMOSPHERE	4/5	INTERACTION	5/5
CHALLENGE	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	5/5

CYRUS II CHESS

£15.95 • Amsoft • 0279 454555 • All PCWs

Chess game with a stunningly detailed 3-D display. The play is quite strong, with several handy features like allowing you to take back a move.

GRAPHICS	5/5	STRENGTH OF PLAY	3/5
LASTING APPEAL	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

DOUBLE T PATIENCE

£14.95 • Thurston Techniques • 0395 277496

All PCWs

Six well-known card games (from Poker Patience to Pairs) to be played either alone or against the computer.

GRAPHICS	2/5	ADDICTIVENESS	5/5
LASTING APPEAL	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	3/5

FISH

£24.99 • Rainbird • 0666 504 326 • All PCWs

The underwater world of Hydropolis is under threat from a gang of interdimensional anarchists. They've stolen a focus wheel and dismantled it; your job is to get it back. Excellent graphics.

ATMOSPHERE	5/5	INTERACTION	4/5
CHALLENGE	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	5/5

FORESTLAND

£14.95 • Classic Quests/Audiogenic

081 861 1166

You're in a forest and you're not sure how you got there, whether you are asleep or awake, and how the devil to get out. You need your wits about you in this game to puzzle your way out of the wicked wood.

CHALLENGE	3/5	ADDICTIVENESS	4/5
ATMOSPHERE	3/5	VALUE VERDICT	10/15

GNOME RANGER

£14.95 • Level 9 • 0344 487597 • All PCWs

You follow the adventures of Ingrid Bottomlow, the intrepid gnome, through a fairy tale landscape full of compelling puzzles. Humorous and rather quaint.

ATMOSPHERE	3/5	INTERACTION	3/5
CHALLENGE	3/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

GOBLIN TOWERS

£14.95 • Classic Quests/Audiogenic

081 861 1166

A game for beginners to adventuring, Goblin Towers sees you as a brave warrior, seeking to retrieve treasure from a goblin-ridden castle.

ATMOSPHERE	3/5	ADDICTIVENESS	3/5
CHALLENGE	3/5	VALUE VERDICT	9/15

GREEN

£12.00 • Classic Software • All PCWs

Race against the Global Warming in this new eco-drama game set in forestland threatened by over zealous lumberjacks. Preserve your morality points, perfect your strategy, and you might save the trees from destruction.

ATMOSPHERE	4/5	CHALLENGE	3/5
GAMEPLAY	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

GUILD OF THIEVES

£24.95 • Rainbird • 0666 504 326 • 8000s only

To join the select Guild of Thieves in Kerovnia, you first have to show your worth by fleeing an island of all its treasures. An excellent adventure!

ATMOSPHERE	5/5	INTERACTION	4/5
CHALLENGE	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	5/5

HEAD COACH

£15.95 • DGA/Coda • 061 330 0184 • All PCWs

You coach an American Football team, picking players and deciding tactics against real NFL teams and players. Incredibly detailed simulation – a must for NFL fans!

ATMOSPHERE	4/5	INTERACTION	5/5
CHALLENGE	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

HOME ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE

£19.99 • CDS • 0302 321134 • All PCWs

Five-in-one games compilation, featuring darts, backgammon, dominoes, cards and a wordsearch game. Excellent graphics, original ideas and presentation – darts has never yet been available as a game for the PCW.

EASE OF USE	5/5	ADDICTIVENESS	4/5
FEATURES	5/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

INGRID'S BACK

£19.95 • Level 9 • 0344 487597 • All PCWs

Sequel to Gnome Ranger in which Ingrid returns to Little Moaning to find it under threat from Jasper Quickbuck who wants to replace it with a yuppie estate. Adventure in 3 parts.

ATMOSPHERE	4/5	INTERACTION	4/5
CHALLENGE	5/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

JINXSTER

£24.95 • Rainbird • 0666 504326 • All PCWs

This one's all about saving the civilisation of a place call Aquitania from the wicked Green Witches. All you have to do is find and reassemble a magic bracelet and redirect its errant powers. A very atmospheric game.

ATMOSPHERE	5/5	INTERACTION	4/5
CHALLENGE	5/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

KNIGHTORC

£19.95 • Level 9 • 0934 814450 • All PCWs

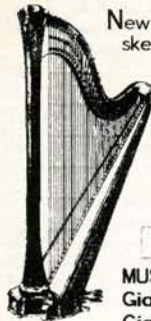
You are an orc in this typical Level 9 adventure by the name of Gridleguts. An addictive game with lots of action, plenty to explore and mind-bending puzzles.

ATMOSPHERE	5/5	INTERACTION	5/5
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LANCELOT

£14.95 • Mandarin/Level 9 • 0625 878888

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ATMOSPHERE	4/5	INTERACTION	3/5
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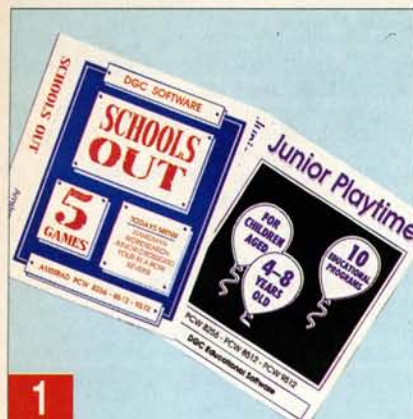
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ATMOSPHERE 3/5 INTERACTION 3/5

CHALLENGE 4/5 VALUE VERDICT 4/5

NEXT MONTH

The guide continues with the categories of WORD PROCESSORS, ACCOUNTS/PAYROLL, UTILITIES and DTP. The month after will cover DATABASES, EDUCATIONAL SOFTWARE, COMMUNICATIONS and PROGRAMMING, and the month after that it's back to this month's topics. Our intention is to keep publishing the three parts of the guide in rotation, updating it each month to include all new products. If you would like to see other sections of the guide, back issues of 8000 Plus are available at £1.75 each. Meanwhile, if you are aware of any significant errors or omissions in the file as published, please let us know. We intend to maintain it as THE authoritative guide to PCW software.



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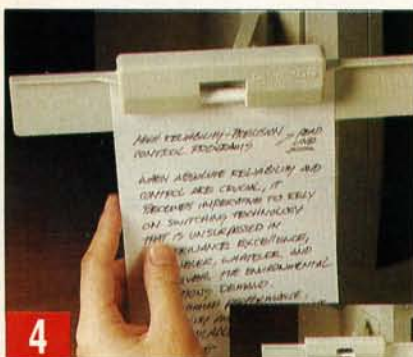
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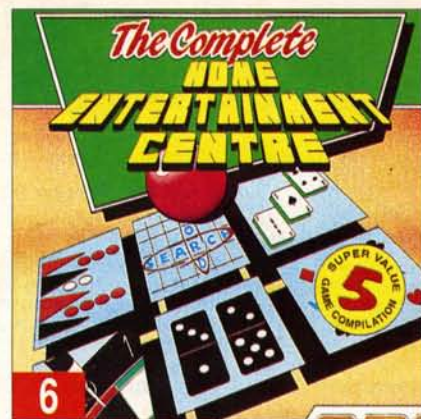
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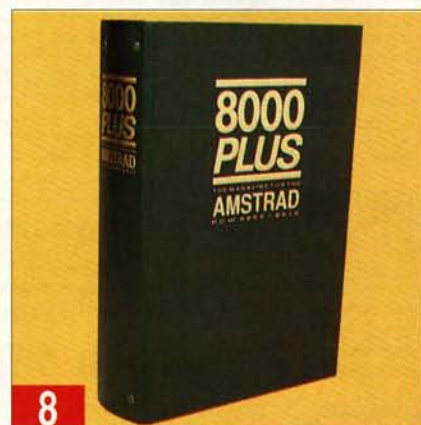
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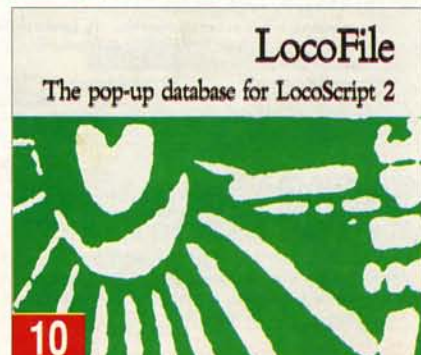
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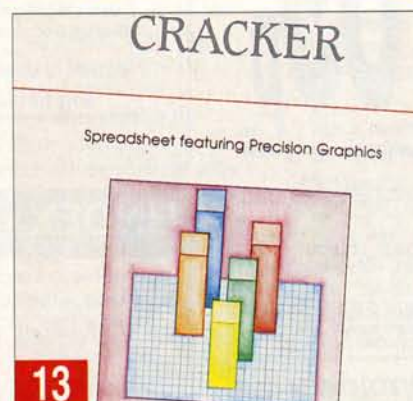
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Postscript

Welcome to readers' corner – the pages in which you have your say.

Well, the New Year certainly seems to have brought out the resolute in you – this month's postbag is full of your statements of intent. We've got competition critics, pleas from Down Under, clip art enquiries and Polish daisywheels, to name but a few topics. To dish out your praise, blame or comment, please send your letters to Postscript, 8000 Plus, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

Everyone's a winner

With reference to your Com-Stax competition in your October issue

I read with interest, in the December issue, the list of "lucky winners" who successfully noted "the 10 differences between the two pictures." I can't help wondering how they were considered to be winners, as there were, in fact, 11 differences as I listed in my entry, as I'm sure other readers must also have done.

I find it even more surprising as the picture in the current issue highlighting the differences in red actually shows the eleven differences that I listed.

I feel that somewhere something must have gone wrong, and I await with interest to hear your comments on this rather strange result to the competition.

Norman D Groom
London

8000 Plus: You're right: something did go wrong. But I can assure you that there's nothing strange about the competition results since all those entries which gained admission into the sacred 8000 Plus competition hat had succeeded in pinpointing at least 10 differences (which we had told you to look out for), if not, the full 11 (one of the differences was inserted accidentally by an over-zealous artist who shall remain nameless).

Basically, we took this into account when we selected the winners; no-one was left out for just spotting 10 differences when there were, in fact, 11. I hope that's cleared up some of the confusion surrounding our October comp.

Now or never?

You have done it again. In the November issue, you said that there would be a review of Sprinter in the December issue. December 8000 Plus arrives and guess what? Nothing; not even an apology for not printing it.

How many months did it take before we finally got a review of the

Amstrad Fax machine; was it three months? And during that time I sent you a fax asking if it was a first, because it was down-loaded direct from my PCW (no hard copy).

There have been other reviews that have been late for one reason or another, but, recently, it has become too frequent. The December issue says that you will tell readers about others who want to start a PCW club. I wrote last month requesting exactly that. This month: nothing. I even enclosed a stamped, addressed envelope.

Is your magazine a carrier for advertising? Or do you really care about your readers? If you are going to offer a service or say you are going to print an article, do it. If you cannot produce the goods on time, say so; don't just leave us in limbo.

Now I've got that off my chest, you still produce the best PCW mag. A punctual New Year to you.

Gregory Thornton Sinclair
Chatham, Kent

8000 Plus: And the same to you, Mr Thornton Sinclair. As I'm sure you can appreciate, when it comes to any new PCW product release, we, the people who bring you the news, are largely at the mercy of the original product manufacturers – in this case, Cirtech and in the case of the fax machine, Amstrad. Sometimes, in a bid to ensure that all the teething problems have been thoroughly quashed before a product is delivered into the hands of the reviewer – and the public – the suppliers can keep us waiting – for quite a long time in this case. All we can say is that we won't mention the Cirtech Sprinter again until such times as we have it here in the office on our desks.

As far as your club appeal letter goes, it will probably be printed next month. I'm afraid it's rather a case of taking your place in the queue'; we do get rather a lot of mail on this subject. As far as any other personal correspondence is concerned, please be patient; putting together 8000 Plus, each month, is quite a demanding job.

Protect and survive

I have just read the December issue of 8000 Plus and in the Tipoffs section a letter was published saying that it is not possible to get Protect to work with the sheet feeder on the PCW 9512. This statement is not correct; if you follow the steps below then you can, in fact, use Protect with the feeder.

- 1) You must use the new version of CP/M as supplied with the sheet feeder; copy the EMS file to your Protect start of day disc.
 - 2) Make sure that Continuous Printing is turned on in Config.
 - 3) Set the Page Length to 76 and the bottom margin to 13 again in Config.
 - 4) Make sure that the Single Sheet code in SETPRINT is 27 25 1 27 25 72.
- I hope this clarifies the situation for you.

Douglas Thompson
Sales Manager – Arnor

8000 Plus: Fair nuff.

Got it covered

Being one of many PCW owners who has difficulty in wading through loads of waffle to find what I want and then to understand what has been written, I was going to suggest that it may be a selling point, or at least may keep a lot of readers buying 8000 Plus, if you inserted, as loose leaf or pullouts, a series in which the various methods on how to use LocoScript are explained very simply.

Although I have been a user of the PCW for over four years there are still a number of things about LocoScript that I find difficult. Blocks and even pagination give me a headache. This is mainly because I have had little use for them, but if instructions were laid out in the suggested simplified method, I might possibly use them more often. I feel there are many such uses for users of LocoScript 'hidden' from the user where a simple guide would be of inestimable value.

I appreciate that, over the years, there have been numerous articles on LocoScript in 8000 Plus but, as

previously stated, there has been too much writing to wade through which has complicated the issue.

E C Paice
Fareham, Hants

8000 Plus: Do you, by any chance, mean a booklet similar to the one gracing this month's cover which we are giving away free? Not to mention our special LocoScript (versions 1 and 2 catered for) 4-page feature beginning on page 10. I hope these will help.

Sharp exit

I recently purchased a PCW9512, primarily to be used as a word processor. I am a complete duffer with computers but, having read the past ten or so editions of your excellent magazine, I recently took the plunge and purchased a Supercalc 2 spreadsheet. I must say that I have found the instruction booklet very well-written and informative (much easier to follow than the User Instructions for the PCW), but I am now about half way through and have come across a problem. The instructions refer to the ESC key but, despite much experimentation, I have been unable to find which key on my keyboard carries out the ESC key function. Please could you enlighten me? Also could you tell me if there are any other unidentifiable keys I am likely to come across.

Your September issue included some free disc labels which I have found very useful. I have looked through your advertisements but have been unable to find a source from which I can purchase further labels. Could you let me know of one, please?

Mr Dave Bowen, Bath

8000 Plus: Well, Mr Bowen, we 'phoned Amsoft, the suppliers of SuperCalc 2 on this one, and they proved to be singularly unhelpful. As, indeed, did Amstrad when we later approached them. Not having a copy of SuperCalc in the office, we had a quick delve through the blue 9512 handbook with which you're supplied when we buy your machine. On page 425 under Commercial software for the PCW 9512, it recommends that you press the [EXIT] key on your keyboard whenever you are prompted to reach for the ESC key. That should do the trick.

As far as replenishing your supply of disc labels is concerned, you've come to the right place. We can supply you with your very own 8000 Plus labels in a variety of different colours: £1 for a multi-coloured pack of five. Please, whatever you do, do not telephone us here in Bath. Instead, either write to our Somerton office (you can find the address at the bottom of the Opening Menu) or use our special Somerton hotline (again, phone number on the same panel at the beginning of the magazine) and ask for Kelly Porter.

For details of more special offers, turn to page 82!

The Pen is mightier

I cannot wholly agree with Alec Rae's review of Music Pad in this month's issue. For a start, I have found its big brother, The Composer's Pen, one of the most user-friendly programs for the PCW. It's even easier than LocoScript to learn to use! The method of entering notes is convenient, the keys falling easily under the left and right hands with the minimum of movement required.

I compose using the Pen and try out the compositions using step-time recording with the EMS Midi and Yamaha keyboard. Notes are entered this way no more quickly or easily than with the Pen. The fact that the key for the note 'C' is 'Q' on the keyboard is only a disadvantage for those 'musicians' who need to write the names of the notes under their score, or use a felt pen to label the notes on their piano!

MusicPad is a good program, well worth its cost, but the Pen offers so much more that it simply is worth every penny. For a start, even simple piano scores need the extra facilities Pen offers, and for a professional looking output, properly justified and presented, the larger program is essential.

A R Shuttleworth
Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk

8000 Plus: Yeah, if you can afford it.

Body matters

Please can you give me particulars of any suppliers of clip art that will load into Micro Design 2 who include in their lists:-

- 1) Outlines of people performing yoga or keep-fit or similar exercise postures.
- 2) Anatomy and physiology diagrams.

F S Heilbronn
Leamington Spa, Warwickshire

8000 Plus: Try AGB-Illustrations (5 Queens Drive, Prestwich, Manchester M25 8HQ). Their phone number is 061 773 2702. Or Educational Cuts, Crosslets, Churchinford, Taunton TA3 7DW or, finally, talk to Gerry Austin at PCW World, Cotswold House, Cradley Heath, Warley, West Midlands B64 7NF (0384 66269) for further information.

PCW Glasnost

Having just read Mr G L Neville's letter in December's issue of 8000 Plus, I should be grateful if you could pass on the following information to him as it may assist him in his search for a Polish daisywheel.

About a year ago, I was fortunate enough to be able to obtain (through the kindness of an 8000 Plus reader in Czechoslovakia) a Russian daisywheel for my PCW 9512 printer. This was manufactured by a firm called ROBOTRON in what used to be East Germany. They also make a Czech daisywheel, so I would think it highly

likely that they would make Polish wheels as well. ROBOTRON wheels have 100 characters, as have the PCW daisywheels; the main difference is the central hole, which does not have the little metal struts which keep the wheel in place in the printer. However, I have not found this to be too much of a problem; a little blue tack works wonders, and has not – so far – managed to clog up anything else. It simply means that every time I use my Russian wheel I have to ensure it is held firmly in place before printing out – or else I get Russian gibberish.

The address of ROBOTRON is as follows:

VEB Robotron
Optima Buromaschinenwerk Erfurt
5010 Erfurt
Mainzerhofplatz, 13.

I hope Mr Neville is successful in finding his Polish wheel.

Mrs L Y Skipper
Cleveland

8000 Plus: Indeed. Thanks very much for the information, Mrs Skipper.

Auntie Podean

I have recently purchased an Amstrad PCW 9512 and have been discussing various programs with a friend who is a regular reader of your magazine.

One of my reasons for purchasing this processor is to endeavour to complete a family history. In the April 1990 issue of your magazine there was an article on Genealogy with a programme featured. Unfortunately, I did not take down details of that but can say that only the company's name and phone number were shown in the article.

For us in Australia this is not much help in obtaining details. Would it be possible for you to advise me where I can write for the information required, or would you be able to pass on my request?

If you are able to help I would be very grateful.

Brian A Mitchell
Holden Hill, South Australia

8000 Plus: The company to which you're referring must be David Computer Software, suppliers of the genealogical programs Genny (£35), Genbase (£25) and Indexer (£20). Their phone number is 061 439 4841 and their address is 38 South Parade, Bramhall, Stockport Sk7 3PJ.

Back-up details

Thank you for the review given to BACKUP in your November issue. I would just like to correct one point made in the article which is not correct and also draw your reader's attention to a major feature which is not mentioned.

The review says that BACKUP selects file by file or whole disc copying, whichever is most efficient. In ➤

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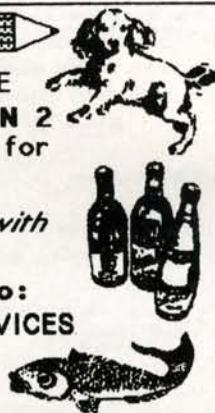
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point of fact, the program is much more intelligent and, as your screen illustration shows, in the latter case only tracks with necessary data in are copied. This generally results in a much quicker copy than DISCKIT can even produce.

Time saving (with security) was the main reason for writing BACKUP. LocoScript 2 disc copying is very slow and usually involves 5 or 6 disc swops – I heard of one person recently who regularly needed 13 swops! DISCKIT is a bit better in this respect. These copying routines do not handle the archive bit in the way BACKUP does.

The statement that BACKUP does nothing that PIP cannot do for free is not true. For one thing, PIP handles the archive bit the wrong way round, so that you have to keep using the same disk, which is contrary to the generally-accepted advice that you should use the NEW copy. Also, it doesn't distinguish between the generations, so you can get in a muddle.

PIP is also very slow and usually will take much longer to back up a large number of files than even copying the whole disc with DISCKIT. Your statement is therefore rather like saying that the PCW does nothing that cannot be achieved with a pencil and paper or typewriter (given enough time!) For small businesses which use the PCW, 'time is money' and for them BACKUP will very quickly recover its cost in this way as well as to improve data security through making backing-up quicker and less of a chore.

Stephen Younger has spent hundreds of hours writing BACKUP (in machine code to make it even faster for the user) and it would be a great pity if your readers were mislead into thinking that this has not resulted in tremendous 'value for money' for them in terms of time-saving.

Dave's Disc Doctor Service Ltd
Paddock Wood, Kent

8000 Plus: Thanks for your letter, Dave.

Softly, softly

I have received the corrected version of the Soft Option disc which resolves my question about the adventure game. Thank you for your attention to my query.

Please be assured that my question about running this game was far from being a complaint. I fully expected the problem to be due to my ignorance of the intricacies of CP/M.

I saw and purchased my first copy of 8000 Plus in April at the news stand in Paddington Station and with it a whole new world of PCW processing became available to me. Not only did I enjoy and find value in the articles, but I almost wore out the advertising pages. Software and supplies for the PCW are not easy to come by in this country and I was amazed at just how much was available.

I ordered the TIPS book and Master

Pack from Future Publishing and was delighted at the prompt fulfillment of my order. The Tips book was well worth my money.

So, that one casual purchase in Paddington Station not only resolved several of my problems but added quite a bit to my software library.

I had planned to subscribe to 8000 Plus but a friend who saw how much I enjoyed the magazine beat me to it with a birthday gift subscription. Hence the unexpected Soft Option bonus.

No, I certainly have no complaints with either Future Publishing or 8000 Plus.

James H Sage
Dallas, USA

8000 Plus: Thanks for your support, Mr Sage. For anyone else who's run into Soft Options difficulties, please send back your disc stating exactly what problems you're having and we'll get a new one off to you. We apologise for the inconvenience.

On the move

I feel that Tim Norris must be living in a sad, lonely world, if he doesn't appreciate the truly magnificent LocoSpell dictionary. As a biologist (there are thousands of us, Tim!) I was astounded at the coverage of the dictionary supplied with my 9512. Having used WordStar at work, I found its dictionary incredibly infuriating, lacking basic terms that really ought to be there in a package designed for professional use. In addition, it would simply give up on many words, offering no suggestion at all. LocoSpell will have a go at anything, so that even the most garbled spelling may produce the right correction.

In my office I've now transferred to LocoScript PC from WordStar, partly to retain some sort of skills compatibility with my domestic 9512 (and, once we get the hardware, real compatibility) but also because the WordStar dictionary and spell check is inadequate. Adding dozens of words to your dictionary is a real waste of time, and that's exactly what was having to do with WordStar.

I'm afraid, though, that LocoScript PC has gained the boring 'unlucky' and lost the useful 'ouabain'. Can I transfer dictionaries from LocoScript 2 to LocoScript PC? Or can I invest the money in many, many PCWs? I have a horrible feeling that both are impossible.

Roy Smith
Burntwood, Staffs

8000 Plus: Actually, you'd be surprised. We've just checked it out with Richard Clayton at Locomotive who has just confirmed that you can, in fact, transfer the LocoSpell user dictionary to LocoScript PC. It is, however, a rather complicated procedure and one that can't be undertaken if you've merged your user dictionary with your system dictionary (the latter in untransferable).

Turn to Appendix 1 of the LocoScript PC reference manual for further information.

Medicinal compound

Being a faithful reader of 8000 Plus I believe all that is written in its pages.

The article on Print Condition (November) made me decide to clean my printer. The recommendation for a monthly attention jogged my conscience as I had not touched it for four years. It has always worked perfectly.

Since cleaning, the paper slipped continuously, compressing all text into four or five lines. Apart from stripping the mechanism there appeared to be little that could be done.

Then I opened your Ultimate Tips Book and there under "roller shine" I found the answer. During cleaning I had wiped the roller with a duster. This had polished the surface of accumulated ink resulting in paper slip. As instructed, I applied my handkerchief soaked in methylated spirit and mainly corrected the fault. It is still present occasionally, but I am now using whisky which has a similar action, with the fumes providing a mental stimulant during work. A single malt is not necessary.

Alan E Crawford
Basingstoke, Hants

8000 Plus: Nice one, Mr Crawford.

Radio II

With reference to Alan Sloan's letter in the November issue entitled Whistle while you work, I too, like to listen to Radio 3 whilst PCWing.

My machine is one made for the German market, with a different plug and port and a 'dongle' for conversion.

I hadn't had it long before I noticed that you could actually stand the (cheap) portable radio on the same desk as the PCW, without any interference.

Knowing that the German DIN standard calls for a much tighter spec. on radio-interfering apparatus, I wasn't unduly surprised, and assumed some kind of foil lining to the casing.

A month or two later, I decided to extend the 256 memory and after dismantling the set, discovered that both sides of the main board had tin-plate covers over them, screwed together and earthed to the common line! It might have made the conversion a bit tricky, but the advantages are enormous.

The original set had caused havoc in the home, various members of the family all over a fairly large house complaining that "Dad had got that damned machine on".

Now they don't even know what I'm doing.

Arthur Pemberton
Newport Pagnell

8000 Plus: Vorsprung durch technik, as they say in Germany.

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Competition

Find our 10 stars- and planets-related words in the square below to win your copy of Terracom!

There's only one way to beat that feeling of anti-climax which so often seems to settle on you once the round of Christmas and New Year parties have died down: and that's to get yourself engaged in some highly addictive set-'em-up and shoot-'em-down star wars. Terracom, the brand new game from the French-born company Logistick, is thoroughly absorbing – as anyone who read last month's review will know.

The object of the game is simple: you have to destroy the sky fortress belonging to the arch-villain of the piece, a wicked emperor rejoicing in the rather cosy little name of Kashodex. If you don't succeed in performing this intergalactic feat of strategic warfare, then the planet Earth must cede to his tyrannical rule forever. And it's all down to you.

All we can say is that Terracom afforded various members of the 8000 Plus team endless hours of frenetic keyboard stabbing in the name of legitimate reviewing.



Terracom:
it's up to you to
destroy the sky fortress
belonging to the evil Kashodex and save
the planet Earth from his tyrannous rule

The good news is that we've got copies of Terracom to give away to the four lucky winners of this month's competition. So what do you have to do to enter? Simple: just find the ten words scattered in our word square, write them down on the back of a postcard and send it in to Terracom Competition, 8000 Plus, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Good luck!

N	H	P	X	E	L	T	T	U	H	S	O	S
P	O	N	S	E	P	A	T	K	P	F	U	A
G	L	I	A	D	Y	E	V	O	S	N	W	T
I	S	H	T	P	K	S	G	R	E	N	F	E
W	T	U	U	A	C	K	R	V	I	G	H	L
A	T	K	R	O	L	F	F	O	C	A	V	L
E	Q	A	N	K	L	L	M	B	I	G	B	I
I	D	A	M	B	U	O	E	N	F	A	D	T
C	O	S	M	O	N	A	U	T	K	R	U	E
Z	A	R	R	S	E	T	Q	C	S	I	L	Y
A	R	M	S	T	R	O	N	G	Z	N	W	I
V	S	E	O	R	U	L	J	A	S	H	O	Z
R	G	A	L	A	X	Y	E	R	T	Y	I	C

NOVEMBER WINNERS

Our congratulations and five double-packs of DGC's Junior Playtime and School's Out go to the five winners of our November competition who correctly identified our close-up photograph as the centre spindle of a 3 inch floppy disc. The winners are R Blurton from Bury St Edmunds, VA Davidson from Stanley, County Durham, FR Howou from Leeds, JR Jackson from Stearport-on-Severn and, finally, R Jackson from Wideopen in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Congratulations!

NEXT MONTH!

LocoScript 2 Surgery

Loco expert Liz Bruce will be showing you how to manage that most fiddly of word processing operations; label printing. She will also be answering all your questions on setting up different paper types in LocoScript 2 and how to keep them permanently on your start of day disc using the program's Settings file. So, for everything you will ever want to know about printing out on different paper sizes with your PCW, don't miss next month's Loco surgery.

Trick or treat?

We will be carrying out a full, in-depth review of one of the most unusual pieces of hardware ever to arrive in the 8000 Plus office: the Oyster Printapen. This RS232-compatible printer is thoroughly portable and about the size of a thick-set fountain pen. Its Wales-based manufacturers claim that all you need do is feed it the necessary ASCII files – and away you go! Is it a trick or is it a treat? We find out in next month's issue.

Reach for the sky

Discovery Software have recently released a new version of the astronomy package, Star Track, which we first reviewed way back in the May '89 issue of the magazine. So if you harbour an abiding interest in things astronomical and would like to use your PCW to navigate your way around the stars and planets of the night sky, don't miss next month's review of this new, improved upgrade.

Cracked it

The February issue sees the penultimate instalment of our Cracker II tutorial series. We will be recapping on some of the hints and tips that have gone before and uncovering some more nuggets of helpful information lurking deep in this gold mine of spreadsheeting ability. Don't miss out on next month's final Cracker episode.

The February issue of

8000 PLUS

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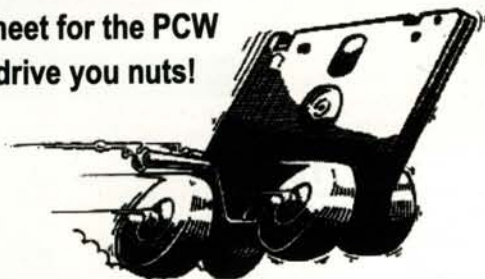
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